



THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 78.

Price, Five Cents.

BUFFALO BILL'S BUCKSKIN BAND

OR
FORCING THE RED SKINS
TO THE WALL



BY
THE AUTHOR
OF "BUFFALO BILL"

BUFFALO BILL RUSHED IN SUDDENLY AMONG SEVERAL OF THE INDIANS, AND CHIEF PANTHER FACE TOOK THE TRAIL TO THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS.



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Buffalo Bill's Buckskin Band;

OR,

FORCING THE REDSKINS TO THE WALL.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

CHAPTER I.

A FRONTIER FIGHT.

It was a thrilling scene—a pitched battle between redskins and whites.

On one side was a swarm of over five hundred redskins, mounted on their wiry ponies, led by a dozen chiefs, each of whom could be distinguished by his feathered head-dress. On the other side were a company of cavalry and a small band of scouts, under the command of Buffalo Bill.

The Sioux had taken the warpath two weeks before, under the lead of a white woman—their renegade queen. She had a wonderful power over the Indians, as her husband, a renegade and outlaw, who had been killed by Buffalo Bill, had been recognized as a great chief among them.

She had vowed to kill the scout, to avenge her husband's death, and once before had led an uprising of the Sioux for that purpose.

They had been defeated, however, and for two months after she had remained in hiding among her red followers, doing her best to get together a number of chiefs,

who should unite their forces to crush the whites, capture Fort Fairview, then the farthest west of all the frontier posts, and massacre those who were stationed there, including the particular object of her hatred, Buffalo Bill, the chief of scouts at the fort.

She was a woman of wonderful nerve and ability, and she soon started on the warpath, followed by the bands of such noted chiefs as White Cloud, Snow Face and Panther Eye.

The scouts had brought in word to Fort Fairview that this army of bloodthirsty Sioux was on the warpath, and Colonel Cassidy, the commander there, had immediately sent out an expedition against them, under command of Captain Fred Forrester and Captain Tabor, two of his officers. Captain Forrester, who, as senior, had command of the expedition, was a man who had long been under a cloud, as he had been suspected of being in league with a band of outlaws in the vicinity, although nothing had ever been done to prove that this was so. He was a brave and capable officer, however, and he managed the expedition against the Sioux in a masterly fashion.

He met the invading redskins at a considerable distance

from the fort, taking them unawares, and arranging his force so as to give the impression that his men were numbered by the thousand instead of by the hundred.

The engagement that followed was short and sharp.

The Indians pressed forward on their ponies in a mad charge.

They were met by a volley that shattered their ranks.

Another crashing volley from the carbines and a sharp fire from the rifles of the scouts, who, under command of Buffalo Bill, had managed to outflank them, and the Indians turned and fled.

The renegade queen, thinking her force was outnumbered, ordered a general retreat, hoping to draw the whites into an ambush, and gave White Cloud command of the rear guard.

Captain Forrester sent a small portion of his men to pursue the Indians, in order to give the renegade queen the idea that she was being pursued, and in the meantime drew the main body of his force back a little, and started them to work throwing up intrenchments and digging rifle pits.

He also sent Roy Rockland, a recent addition to the band of Buffalo Bill's scouts, back to the fort, a day's journey, for reinforcements.

Rockland had formerly been a highwayman, operating on the various stage lines, and having for his only companion a gigantic Chinaman, who acted as his servant, and appeared devoted to him.

Once before Rockland had come to the rescue of Fort Fairview soldiers when attacked by redskins, and had brought them help, saving two companies from destruction.

For this service, Buffalo Bill offered to take him under his command as a scout, and Roy Rockland, being eager to reform and give up his outlaw life, gladly accepted the offer.

While he was spurring on toward the fort, Buffalo Bill, Frank Powell, Texas Jack and the other scouts were pressing the rear guard of the Indians hard, to keep up the bluff that they were the advance guard of a large force.

They were so successful in their attacks that Chief White Cloud was wounded and captured, and his followers fled in confusion, without attempting a rescue. He was taken back to the fortified camp which Captain Forrester was constructing.

After the departure of Roy Rockland from the camp on the ridge, Fred Forrester felt relieved, for he had placed his hope of aid in the hands of a man who, he did not doubt, would soon do his part of the work to bring help to him.

It was well enough to have the redskins retreating, for

that gave him a chance to recuperate his force, and also to fortify.

But Fred Forrester was too good an Indian fighter not to know that the redskins would soon discover that they had been deceived in the moment of trouble, and that what they had believed was another force was simply a clever ruse and make-believe show of rescue.

This would infuriate them the more, and they would determine to overwhelm the force which they had so nearly had at their mercy in the morning.

Knowing this, Fred Forrester had told Captain Tabor, who, with Buffalo Bill, was in command of the party sent in pursuit, not to push them close, and to be ready to retreat at a moment's notice.

Nor was he to let his men scatter to any great distance, if the Indians halted to give battle, or to force him to show his strength, he was to return at once, and leave Buffalo Bill and his scouts to watch their movements.

Captain Forrester was delighted at the chance he had to fortify, and kept every man hard at work felling trees, throwing up dirt and building a hastily-constructed protection for the wounded, and the horses, if he was forced to bring them into his little fort.

Fortunately, his position was at the very head of a brook, where a dozen springs gave forth clear and cool water, and this was a good thing for the wounded.

Surgeon Powell made his hospital in a secluded spot, and his patients were cared for skillfully and thoroughly, after which he left his soldier assistant in charge, and sought to aid Captain Forrester.

The White Cloud's wounds had been cared for as tenderly as though he had been the brother of the surgeon, and the chief had rallied and returned to consciousness, though he was very weak.

He recognized the surgeon scout, and said, in a low tone:

"The White Cloud sees his white brother—why does he not kill me?"

"It is not my style, White Cloud," replied the surgeon, in perfect Sioux.

"You were found wounded by my people, and brought here, and I have cared for you, as it was my duty to do, even if I did not owe you my life, for I have not forgotten that you saved my life once when I sought your people to urge them to bury the tomahawk, and they would have killed me.

"The White Cloud must remain here, and be quiet, or he will die of his wounds."

"And my people?"

"Have retreated, with their renegade queen."

The chief nodded, and the surgeon scout gave him a sleeping potion, and walked away.

When he joined Captain Forrester, it was just as Rock-

land was departing, and soon after the young officer showed the surgeon all that he had done to fortify.

"It is just like you, Fred; and, if they do turn on us, which I am sure they will do, we can stand them off for two or three days, at least.

"Did you send for any stated number of troops?"

"No; I put the situation as it was, with my reduced force, and the strength of the Sioux, with perhaps another column of them yet to hear from, so left it to the colonel to send what he deems best; and, as he may regret not letting me have more, he will doubtless send several hundred now, with Major Denton, or Major Merton, to command them."

"I'll bet a horse he does not relieve you, and I would feel he had wronged you if he had."

"You mean by sending a ranking officer?"

"Certainly."

"Well, he may not; but I wrote him not to consider me in the matter."

"Just your way, old fellow; but yonder comes Cody."

It was growing dark, but both officers suddenly beheld the chief of scouts dash out of the timber and come rapidly on toward the fort.

As he rode into the inclosure, he called out:

"I got a nip in the arm, Frank, and, as it bleeds freely, Captain Tabor sent me back as courier, for he wished to report, Captain Forrester, that the Sioux had halted to make a stand, evidently discovering his weakness, and that he will retreat rapidly after dark, leaving Texas Jack and two others of my men to watch the redskins."

"It is what I expected, Bill; but we will be ready for the redskins when they return, and our messenger has already gone to the fort with a letter asking for reinforcements."

"But you did catch it, did you not?"

And Captain Forrester glanced anxiously at the wound on the scout's arm, which the surgeon was already examining.

"You were in close quarters, Bill, for this is a knife thrust," said Frank Powell.

"Yes; I ran in on several of them, and Chief Panther Eye gave me this reminder."

"And Panther Eye?" laconically asked Fred Forrester.

"Has struck the trail for the happy hunting-grounds."

"I don't often take a scalp, but his hangs to my saddle, yonder.

"How about it, Frank?"

"It is not serious, though the point of the knife touched the bone.

"Keep your arm in a sling for a few days, and keep in camp, for Jack can see to the Sioux movements, and I can help him."

"No; you don't leave camp, Powell, for you are too valuable just now as a surgeon to turn you into a scout.

"Jack can do Cody's outside work, and he can help me here," responded Captain Forrester, and, the wounded arm having been dressed, the three friends sat down to supper just as the shadows of night fell upon the scene.

CHAPTER II.

TENDERFOOT TOM WRITES A LETTER.

"By the way, Bill, in the excitement of the day I forgot to tell you that I had a letter for you," said Captain Forrester, as the two sat smoking together after supper, while Surgeon Powell had returned to look after his wounded men.

"A letter for me, captain?" asked the scout, with some surprise, and he held forth his hand for the letter, which the officer took from his pocket, with the remark:

"Yes; it came some days ago to the fort, brought by Rainbow Rob, the stage driver, and the colonel asked me to hand it to you."

Buffalo Bill took the letter, and laughed.

It was folded in the shape of a cocked hat, and sealed with flour paste, while the address it bore was in a very remarkable style of writing, and as follows:

"Fer

"BUFLER BILL,

"Chieef o' Skouts

"At Fort Farnu.

"By ther kind hand o'

"RAINBOW ROB."

Buffalo Bill smiled as he read the odd address, and, tearing open the missive, read the contents.

It was guiltless of address or date, but Buffalo Bill knew that it was from Tenderfoot Tom, a stableman at one of the relay stations, who was doing a little private detective work for Buffalo Bill. He had formerly been in league with a band of outlaws, who were holding up stations, and Buffalo Bill, learning this, gave him the alternative of being hung as an outlaw or going into his employ to watch for outlaws and report their movements when the scout was away on other business.

Buffalo Bill knew that the fellow had some good in him, and when Tenderfoot Tom was given a chance to become honest and dodge the hangman's noose, he grasped it eagerly.

His letter told that there had been another hold-up on the stage line to Pocket City, a little mining village situated near Fort Fairview.

Contrary to the expectation of Fred Forrester, who saw the scout frown after he had read this remarkable letter, Buffalo Bill made no comment upon it, but said, quietly:

"I hope we will get reinforcements, so as to give these

Sioux a severe thrashing, for I must go to Gold Pocket City as soon as I can get away."

Ere comment could be made by Captain Forrester, the sound of hoofs was heard coming through the darkness, followed by a sharp challenge from the sentinel.

"Tabor and men of the —th Cavalry!" came the response, and, a moment after, that officer came up to the quarters of Fred Forrester, with the remark:

"I regret to report, Captain Forrester, that the redskins discovered that they had been deceived, and are returning."

"We will give them a warm welcome; but sit down, Tabor, and have some supper," was the calm response of Fred Forrester, whom no peril could disconcert.

CHAPTER III.

DEVIL DICK VISITS GOLD POCKET CITY.

There was a man who visited Gold Pocket City now and then, who was known to be a character so desperate that the bravest men shunned him, and cared not to face him, even with odds.

He went by the name of Devil Dick, and his brute strength was known to be marvelous, while he was quick as a panther in his movements, though a very large man.

Whenever he came to Gold Pocket, he left one or more newly made graves as a souvenir of his visit, and such was the reputation he had along the entire line of mines.

If he had ever met his match, the fact was unknown, but that he had been in some desperate encounters, many could take oath on.

Indeed, his personal appearance indicated this, for there was a deep scar along his left cheek, which extended to the back of his neck, and one nostril of his nose had a slit in it, while a round hole in his right ear indicated that a bullet had cut through there.

A slice had also been taken off of his chin, and across his throat was a gash, as if he had at some time very nearly had it cut from ear to ear.

On his forehead was another scar, left by a bullet, and two fingers of his left hand were missing.

What scars he had on his body and limbs no one knew, but he said that he had been shot and slashed some forty times, and, if his face was a criterion for the rest of his frame, there was no reason for doubting his word.

Devil Dick's hair was red, and he went clean-shaven, as though proud of the scars his face could show.

His neck was short and thick, his shoulders herculean, and his arms long, and knotted with muscles.

He stood firm on his feet, which, like his hands, were enormous, and his form was clad in a red woolen shirt, black pants, and a sombrero, the brim of which hung down around his neck, but was pinned up in front with

a miniature representation of Mephisto in coral, thus advertising his name of Devil Dick.

The man was an itinerant gambler, roaming from camp to camp, and making the rounds every two months.

People did not dare refuse to play with him if invited, or to win if they did, so he was always in funds, and gold seemed to be his god.

What he did with his money no one knew, but he had been heard to say that he intended to win enough gold to make up for his evil looks, and could then go East and marry a girl he had always loved.

One fellow had foolishly asked him, one night over a game of cards:

"But does she love you, Dick?"

"Why?"

"Well, I wondered if she could, if, as you say, she is a beautiful girl."

"I shall ask her to love me, and marry me, and, if she refuses, I will do with her just what I intend to do with you for insulting me."

"What is that?"

"Kill you," and he shot the man dead where he sat, threw his body one side, and continued his game.

He never rode horseback, always went on foot, wearing moccasins, and carrying a knapsack and a pair of blankets strapped upon his back.

These he never went without, and he was always ready for a tramp, carrying his worldly belongings with him.

If he had any friendships, no one knew whom it was he honored with his preference, unless it was Bravo Ben, a tough citizen in Gold Pocket, who had once saved him from a band of Vigilantes who were on his track to hang him for killing a woman in one of the camps who had jeered him.

And this was the character who walked into Gold Pocket one afternoon, and halted as he heard his name called from a cabin, one of the first ones in the settlement.

"Hello, Ben. It's you, is it?"

"Come on up to the Roost with me," called back Devil Dick from the trail, where he halted, staff in hand.

"No, pard; I are used up, so come by an' see me."

Devil Dick at once ascended to the cabin, and found Bravo Ben there alone, his two arms in slings.

"Hello! Been tackling a grizzly, Bravo, and got chewed up a bit?"

"Yes, a she tiger, and a bad one."

"It were a woman did this," said Bravo Ben, savagely. Devil Dick laughed, a hoarse, unpleasant, mocking laugh.

"You may grin, but it are so."

"A woman?"

"Yas."

"A man in a woman's outfit?"

"No; a mere gal."

"The deuce!"

"Thet's what she arc."

"In Gold Pocket?"

"Yas."

"Where is she?"

"At Gambler Gaul's cabin, at the Roost."

"I heard Gambler Gaul had been hanged."

"So he was, for he turned out to be Captain Brimstone."

"They had it that way in the lower camps; but how was it, for you know I have not been round to Gold Pocket for some time?"

"Oh, he jist played two games, thet o' Gambler Gaul and Brimstone, and Buf'ler Bill took his trail, played ther deserter sergeant, and roped him in."

"Swung him up?"

"No; he died o' bullet fever."

"Buffalo Bill is a dandy."

"He are, and maybe some day he'll tackle you."

"Maybe he will; but I'll be there, Ben."

"Now, to your having been carved up this way."

"Who is she?"

"She calls herself ther leddy sport."

"Ah! Gambler?"

"Yas."

"Any other name?"

"Yas, Bowie-Knife Bessie."

"I see; and she uses a knife?"

"Don't you see she does?"

"Look at me."

"Yes; and now where is she?"

"Up at ther Roost, as I said, and the new landlord is dead gone on her, all ther boys think she's an angel, and she's jist got Gold Pocket as she wants it."

"I must make her acquaintance, for I gamble a little myself," and the desperado laughed, in a quiet, threatening way, while Bravo Ben said, in a low, earnest tone:

"I has a favor to ask o' you, Devil Dick."

"Granted," was the ready reply, and the face of Bravo Ben grew malignant with hatred at the quick reply of the desperado whom all so greatly feared.

CHAPTER IV.

DEVIL DICK TAKES A CONTRACT.

"Pard, it are just what I wants yer ter do, ter meet her, fer I has done so," said Bravo Ben, wincing with pain, physically, and also at the remembrance of the meeting.

"So I see," was the dry rejoinder of Devil Dick, who, whatever his other faults, did not affect the dialect of the border when he knew how to speak differently.

Then he added:

"But the favor you wished to ask of me, Ben?"

"I has a call on yer, hasn't I?"

"You have, for I owe you my life."

"Waal, I wants ter hev yer cancel ther debt."

"I'll do it, if you will only tell me how."

"Does yer want any dust?"

"I always want gold."

"Yer'll git it, fer I'll pay yer well fer ther work I wants yer ter do."

"See here, Ben," and the eyes of the desperado glistened.

"You wish me to do you a favor?"

"I does."

"You reminded me that I owed it to you?"

"Yas, yer does."

"I told you once that whenever I could do you a good turn I would."

"That's what yer said."

"Well, what in thunder do you talk about money to me for?"

"I want gold, yes, and I'll always get it, in whatever manner suits me, for gold I am bound to have; but, if you hint about paying me, I'll break every bone in your body, and thus do you a favor by preventing the hangman from taking you out of life."

Bravo Ben was positively frightened, for the face of the desperado was livid, and his eyes were wicked and menacing in the extreme.

"All right, pard; but I wanted yer ter git some gold as well as settle up ther old debt yer owes me fer yer life."

"If it's a case of divide, yes; but, if it is to have you pay me, no."

"Now, what is it you wish done?"

"Did you ever kill a woman?"

The question came so pat, it was so unexpected, that the desperado started, as though he had been shot at.

And, more, his face changed color rapidly, and his features moved.

"What's the matter, Dick?"

Instantly the man became calm.

He certainly had command over himself to a wonderful degree.

Then he remarked, in a careless tone:

"You ask me if I have ever killed a woman?"

"That's what I asked yer."

"I have."

"Ther deuce! Then, yer won't be squeamish about killing another?"

"I told you that when I went East, with plenty of gold to give one woman all that she could covet in the world, and she refused to marry me, if my gold would not be a

balm for my hideous looks and warped nature, then I meant to kill her.

"If I could kill her, whom I love, why, then, I can kill any other woman without a pang of remorse.

"Do you understand?"

"I do."

"Now, what is it that you want done?"

"I wants a woman killed."

"The one who wounded you?"

"Yas."

"Tell me of her, and of your affair with her."

This Bravo Ben did, making it all out in his favor.

The woman, Bowie-Knife Bessie, the lady sport, young, dashing and handsome, had come to Pocket City from no one knew where, and seemed to be there to stay.

She had interfered when Bravo Ben had threatened to kill a tenderfoot known as the Jersey Kid if he did not tell him the whereabouts of a mine he had discovered.

He had laughed at the woman when she commanded him to leave the boy alone, and, to the surprise of every one, the woman had drawn a pistol and fired, wounding Bravo Ben in both his arms, thus making him powerless to draw a weapon.

"Now, if ther boy goes under," said Ben, "and ther woman, too, you and me gits his find, and you has ther pleasure o' paying ther debt o' deep gratitude you owes me."

"There you go again, Ben, about my debt of life to you; but all right; it is your nature, and there's an old saying that you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

"I was born a gentleman, Ben, strange as it may seem to you, but I went wrong, and when I shot at a man who insulted me I killed his mother—by accident, it is true, but it was a woman's life, all the same.

"Well, I loved a little girl, who never knew me as I was in my evil life, and I had to leave her, for no one was aware that I was the murderer, but all would have been proven had I remained.

"I came West to hunt gold, for I was poor, and I've got it, too."

"Whar', pard?"

"That is none of your darned business; but I've got it, and I got this, and this, and others in my hunt for it."

And he touched, almost savagely, the scars on his face and hands.

"Now, tell me what you wish done, and I'll do it."

The man had spoken in a low, earnest tone, and he seemed to be deeply moved the while, but once more was himself again, as he now turned to Bravo Ben.

"Well, go up to Poker Hall ter-night, and git in with thet woman.

"You kin raise a row with some man, an' in ther fuss jist let her have it.

"As fer ther boy, we kin settle him arterward, onless yer sees yer chance ter throw a bullet inter him, too.

"Does yer onderstand, Devil Dick?"

"I do, and I'll be off, for I wish to get to the Roost for supper."

"I has a pard I eats with over yonder, as I can't do nothin', and you is welcome."

"No; I accept no man's hospitality, but pay for all I get.

"I'll let you hear from me again when I have paid the life debt I owe you."

"Yer hain't mad, Pard Dick?"

"Yes; I have been mad ten years; good-by," and the desperado walked away from the cabin, and wended his way on up the valley.

Those who saw him shook their heads, ominously, and said:

"Devil Dick is in camp, so thar will be music to-night up at Poker Hall."

Landlord Bony, a tall, ministerial-looking man, who ran the gambling-house, as well as the only hotel in the place, saw him enter the hotel, and cast a very queer glance at him.

Of course, he did not like his appearance, for who could? And he was half tempted to refuse him quarters, just on his looks, when, in a pleasant voice and polite manner, wholly different from what he had expected, the desperado said:

"Good-evening, landlord.

"I wish to put up with you, if you please."

"Certainly; please register."

If the landlord had thought his guest could not write, he was quickly undeceived, for, in a delicate, almost feminine, hand, he wrote:

"DEVIL DICK,
America."

CHAPTER V.

A WOMAN'S HATE.

In her retreat before the troopers, the renegade queen was closely watching the situation.

She rode ahead, and, glass in hand, would often turn her horse and glance back over the scene.

The White Cloud was in command of the rear, so she felt no fear of being overpressed, for she had every confidence in that young chief.

But suddenly a warrior dashed up, with word that the White Cloud was missing.

He had been either killed or captured.

The renegade queen bit her lips, somewhat nervously. She had relied so completely upon the White Cloud.

Then she called to Panther Eye, and bade him go back and see if the White Cloud could be rescued.

The chief was glad to obey, and rushed back, with an earnestness that sent him almost into the midst of the troopers.

In fact, he went a trifle too far, with the score of warriors at his back, for Buffalo Bill saw him, and dashed right in among his braves.

He knew the Panther Eye as a cruel and bitter foe to the whites, and one who several times had prevented the burying of the tomahawk between his people and the pale-faces.

So Buffalo Bill took his chances with death to capture or kill the Panther Eye.

His magnificent horse carried him like a thunderbolt in among the group of braves, and ponies and riders went down.

Texas Jack and several other scouts followed close, and Captain Alfred Tabor joined in the hand-to-hand conflict.

It lasted but a moment, but in that moment Panther Eye lost his life and scalp at the hands of Buffalo Bill, and a dozen warriors went down, while as many ponies were captured.

It was a victory for the palefaces, and hastened the redskins in their retreat.

Then word went to the renegade queen.

But she had seen it all with her glass, and she was in a furious mood.

Instead of the recapture of the White Cloud, the Panther Eye had lost his life.

But the glass of the renegade queen also showed her that in the midst of the fracas the troopers had pressed more rapidly forward, and shown their weakness.

They were not fresh troops—this she saw—but the same whom she had before fought.

She had seen Buffalo Bill kill the Panther Eye and take his scalp.

This was, doubtless, the way the White Cloud had gone, was suggested to her mind.

The scout, her foe, still lived!

Her glass also showed her Captain Alfred Tabor and Texas Jack, for she had before noted these on the field.

Then she looked back beyond the mere handful of troopers.

There was no other force pursuing.

Something was moving, surely, and, as she was not being hot pressed, she would call a halt.

Riding upon a higher rise of the prairie, she looked back over the country.

She saw the distant timber where the troopers had gone into camp.

Her glass was a powerful one, and, as the soldiers did

not know she had it, they had no fear of being seen at that distance.

But she did see them; she saw trees being cut down in the timber, and men at work with spades and shovels.

This showed weakness on the part of the enemy.

They were fortifying against attack, and that showed they feared it.

Some clever ruse had sent the Indians off in retreat.

So the renegade queen took advantage of the situation, and decided to make her power felt.

She sent for her other chiefs, and said to them that she was sure that no other troops had come.

The Great Spirit gave her power to see further than they did, so they must halt.

The halt was made, and a bold front put on, and this checked the pursuit, and soon after sent the troopers back to cover, as had been their order.

Texas Jack and two other scouts were left to watch the movements of the enemy.

Then the queen said that she knew that the palefaces were fortifying their camp.

They were but a handful, and they must be surrounded in the night, and at dawn attacked.

They had killed the White Cloud and the Panther Eye, and nearly half a hundred of her warriors had been slain or wounded, with as many ponies, as well.

In the paleface camp were their foes, scouts and soldiers.

There was the man—Buffalo Bill—who had slain the great white chief, her husband, and the men who had massacred the warriors with him were also there.

Let them take the little fort, and a hundred scalps would hang at their belts, and the paleface settlers would fly from their country back toward the rising sun.

The Long Hair would be captured alive and tortured to death, and all the Sioux in their village would rejoice.

Such was the way the cunning woman talked, and she aroused her hearers to the wildest pitch of fury.

She had come to hate her own race, and she was cruelly revengeful against Buffalo Bill.

Hating, she meant to kill—to be merciless.

Then she called to her a young warrior, and told him to go with all speed to the signal mountain.

This would save him a ride of a day, and he must signal for more warriors.

"Burn five smokes," she said, for she knew that this would bring her five hundred more warriors.

He was to go to the signal mountain, upon which the eye of a redskin sentinel at the village was constantly kept.

He would send up one smoke; that is, let the dense smoke of a smothered fire ascend for a minute.

Then he would wait to see if a smoke curled up from the lookout post in the mountains.

If so, he was to send up his smoke again, then smother it, and so on until five separate columns of smoke had gone heavenward.

Half an hour after they were reported in the village, there would be five hundred warriors on the wartrail, going to join their renegade queen.

She had started out on a raid merely to capture Buffalo Bill, but circumstances were shaping affairs so that she would make it a big war, and would send up a wail of anguish from fort, mining camp and settlement that would long be remembered.

The renegade queen, in her woman's hatred and revenge, was going mad, and woe be unto those who felt her cruel blows.

CHAPTER VI

IN SUSPENSE.

Captain Alfred Tabor returned to the camp, and made his report.

He was glad to see that Captain Forrester had neglected nothing, and felt relieved to note the defenses already thrown up.

"You have sent back for reinforcements, sir?" he asked.

"Oh, yes; by our newest scout, and he will go at full speed."

"Then, we can hold them off, for a few days, at least."

"How did you discover that they meant to return?"

"Texas Jack sent me word that, with his glass, he had seen the renegade queen watching the situation, and that she, too, had a glass."

"Then she took in everything?"

"Most certainly, for the halt was made by the redskins soon after Jack's report came.

"When Buffalo Bill here made his grand dash upon Panther Eye, and scalped him, I had my men come up, for fear of a surround, and the queen doubtless noted the fact, and saw our weakness.

"At any rate, she came to a halt, threw out her scouts, and, obeying your orders, Captain Forrester, I drew off my men, under cover of the darkness, and returned."

"You did well, Captain Tabor; but you left Texas Jack and two others behind?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"If they make a move, Jack will get it down fine, you may be sure," said Buffalo Bill.

"I feel that he will; but did you suffer much, Captain Tabor?"

"Lost one poor fellow killed and three wounded, with half a dozen horses.

"I had to press them, you know, to make believe we were in earnest."

"Ah, yes; and you were fortunate to lose no more."

"The wounded I sent on to Powell's quarters, and brought the dead soldier back to save his scalp. Ah, there goes a challenge!"

As Captain Tabor spoke, the sentinel out on the prairie, a couple of hundred yards from the timber, was heard to call out, sternly:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

The response was not heard, but it was evidently satisfactory, for a minute after a horseman came riding through the gloom at a canter.

"It is Scout Buck, for I know his style of riding," Buffalo Bill said, and a minute after the horseman halted at the quarters of the young commander.

"Well, Buck, what news from the front?" asked Captain Forrester.

"The reds have halted, picketed their horses, and are having a grand pow-wow, cap'n, with that fiend of a woman for head devil, and my idea is that they take the trail leading this way before dawn.

"But Jack sent me to tell you that he is going off on a little trail all his own.

"He got onto a little scene, where the renegade queen was giving orders to a warrior, and Jack knew him as one of the Sioux couriers, so he is going after help, either to the village or to some other column.

"Texas Jack noted the course he took, and followed, so sent me back to report, and ask Chief Cody to send Nelse out to take his place, and also to say that half a dozen scouts wouldn't be a man too many to watch those red devils."

"All right, Buck; I'll send Nelse and three others back with you, and you must divide forces, and keep your eyes well open," said Buffalo Bill.

"You bet we will, for closed eyes this night won't open in the morning," was the significant reply.

"I am sorry Jack went off on that courier's trail, and yet he knew, and, it maybe, will pan out for the best.

"Get your supper, Buck, while I look up the boys to return with you," and Buffalo Bill went over to where the scouts had their camp.

Ten minutes after, five Braves in Buckskin rode away from the little fort, and went back to join the one brave fellow then between the troops and their red foes.

"Well, Cody, we are in for it," said Fred Forrester, tranquilly, after the chief of scouts returned from seeing his Braves in Buckskin depart for the front.

"Yes, sir, without doubt."

Frank Powell just then came up and joined the group, for Captain Tabor, and the two lieutenants, Ned Ford and Evans Rolston, were also at headquarters, Fred Forrester

having sent for them to join him there. Whatever the feeling in the past might have been which Captain Tabor and Lieutenants Ford and Rolston held against Captain Forrester when he was under suspicion of being in league with outlaws, they felt now that it had been unjust, and wished to make every reparation in their power.

Besides, they had seen his splendid pluck that day, his skill and coolness, and they felt the most perfect confidence in his ability to pull through, if any man could.

They knew that Forrester, Powell and Cody were the warmest friends, and that they were outsiders, as it were; but they were now all in the same boat, so to speak, and it was sink or swim together, and Fred Forrester was the helmsman upon whom all depended.

So the six men chatted together pleasantly, as though no fearful ordeal was before them, no death-ax hung over their head.

Between them and a ruthless foe were the six scouts, and the chain of soldier outposts around the little timber fort.

Surgeon Powell reported that there would be for duty in a fight seventy-six men, all told, with Cody and six scouts, so that they knew they would have to fight about eight to one.

Yet not a face blanched, not a nerve quickened with fear.

They all awaited the dread ordeal, officers and men, and, as dawn began to brighten the east, it came, for the sentinel soldiers challenged sharply all around the line, and the six scouts came in, the soldiers with them, and redskins were, a moment after, rushing to the attack.

CHAPTER VII.

TEXAS JACK ON THE TRAIL.

Texas Jack had won fame as a soldier and a scout, and afterward on the Texan prairies he had become a noted trailer and ranger.

Having drifted up to the Northern plains, and become the trusted and tried pard of Buffalo Bill, his name soon spread along the frontier as a scout of wondrous skill and daring.

When he saw the renegade queen in council with the chiefs, and beheld the Sioux courier sent for, he knew that the latter was to be sent off on some mission.

What could that mission be but for help?

His glass revealed the group, and he knew the courier from his style of dress, and that he was, with his horse, stripped for a rapid run.

"I'll follow him," decided Texas Jack.

And, dropping back to where Scout Buck was, he told him of his intention, and sent word to Buffalo Bill, his chief.

Then he returned to his position, and saw the courier flying away down the slope of prairie toward a stream.

"He follows that to the valley, and will keep it to Signal Mountain.

"That's his little game, and I'll go, too."

With that, Texas Jack slipped around the end of the redskin line, and, it being night now, cut across until he came to the head of a small valley.

"He has gone through here, for he could not cross the ridge without going far around.

"Now, Rascal, show your instinct, and take the scent of that Injun and his pony."

The intelligent horse seemed to understand his master, and gave a snort, as though scenting the air.

Then, given the rein, he moved on up the valley, his head bent low like a hound on the trail.

"Ah, you're a trailer, you are, old Rascal, for you have struck it, sure, and I have only now to let you have your way," muttered the scout.

And on the horse went, at a swinging walk.

Every hour or so he would be halted for a short rest, and then once more keep on his way.

An hour before dawn the scout drew rein at a brook, watered his horse, took off the saddle and bridle, and staked him out, after which he threw himself down to rest.

The horse fed for half an hour, and then lay down and went to sleep, lying flat out, so as to completely rest his limbs.

He seemed to comprehend that he followed a long trail.

He was a dark roan, with black mane and tail, and splendidly formed for speed and bottom.

Dawn came, and, as the east grew rosy, the horse awoke and gave a low whinny.

Instantly Texas Jack was upon his feet, and, while he was eating his breakfast of a cracker and slice of cold deer meat, the horse indulged in some mouthfuls of the dew-laden grass.

Then Texas Jack began to look for a trail, and he gave a low whistle, as he said:

"He's gone along since dawn, for the dew has been knocked off.

"We camped pretty near together last night, Pard Injun."

Rascal was soon saddled and mounted, and held on the trail, the scout congratulating himself that he had passed the redskin, unseen, in the night, and had also been passed by him in the early dawn.

It was ten o'clock when Texas Jack left his horse and ascended a hill on foot.

At the summit he glanced around him, and some ten miles away he saw Signal Mountain.

He knew that from its summit the Sioux could signal by a column of smoke to the mountains, fifty miles away.

He felt that he was right, that the Sioux courier had come there to signal for more warriors.

Calmly, he waited and watched, and in half an hour after his coming, with his glass turned upon Signal Mountain, he saw a dark smoke going up in a column from the spot where he now knew the Indians to be.

The smoke continued to ascend for some minutes, and then ceased.

The scout waited, with the utmost patience.

He knew all the Indians' signs and signals.

It was a still day, and the smoke went straight upward, so could be seen as far as the eye could reach, and the vision of a redskin, trained to signaling, could see a very long way off.

At length, another column of smoke ascended, but only for a minute, when it was shut off.

"One," said Texas Jack.

Then, after a couple of minutes or so, a second column of smoke went up.

"Two."

Another pause, and a third ascended

"Three."

Then again a rest, and up curled the fourth column.

"Ah, four! The renegade queen wants four hundred braves!"

Another rest, and a fifth column soared heavenward.

"Five! Can she wish more?"

"It means that she intends the worst kind of devilment!"

"No; that is all, and God knows they are enough."

"Now, that redskin will wait yonder at the base of Signal Mountain to guide the braves to the renegade queen."

"At least, I think so, but must find out."

"Then I can strike to the westward along the ridge, and must head off the reinforcements which Captain Forrester sent for."

"There will be enough to divide, so we can ambush those fellows, and have a force between the renegade and her village, so when the others are beaten we can make it rather hot for the Sioux."

"Now to locate that Indian; and I only wish I could start him for the happy hunting-grounds, but I cannot do that, for he is to be the guide for those coming."

"Fortunately, I can head the force off that has been sent for to the fort."

So saying, the scout descended the hill, left his horse in clover, so to speak, and went on foot toward Signal Mountain, going at a fast Indian trot.

"I can rest while riding, and Rascal must have his rest now," he said.

In less than two hours he was at the base of Signal Mountain, and, scouting with the greatest caution, saw the

redskin's pony hidden in a thicket, and his saddle and blankets near.

"He is off on a hunt, so will remain."

"This is all I want to know," and he started on the back trail, keeping up the same tireless trot, that carried him back to his horse in less time than he had before made the ten miles.

"Rascal, you have had just six hours' rest, plenty to eat, and must go."

"Be off, old fellow," and leaping into his saddle, he set off at a canter.

It was late in the afternoon, and he pushed on until night, when he rested for a couple of hours, and again held on.

Just after dawn he drew rein suddenly, for a horseman was before him, not two hundred yards away, and from his lips broke the words:

"Buffalo Bill!"

CHAPTER VIII.

TAKING DESPERATE CHANCES.

It was very evident that the Sioux supposed, with the withdrawal from the feigned pursuit, Captain Tabor had taken the scouts with his soldiers, and that there was nothing to be feared between them and their point of attack.

But the Braves in Buckskin worked quietly and with skill, and, cunning as were the redskins, they were more so.

Though unseen by the Sioux, they had their eyes on their movements; and, as they began to stretch out on either wing, to surround the foes in the timber, the scouts divided, and held on around with them.

Thus, when the circle of death was complete around the little fort, and the redskins lay half a mile off, waiting for the time to attack, the scouts were between them and their prey, also surrounding the timber, though far apart from each other.

Within the circle of scouts was another of soldiers, close in toward the camp, and thus, for half an hour, the situation remained unchanged.

The scouts would not leave their posts to give further warning of danger, for fear just at the point thus vacated the Sioux might press on toward the fort.

Then they knew that the chief of the Braves in Buckskin was a sleepless man when foes were about and duty was to be done.

He had read the intention of the Sioux, and would not be surprised.

So they waited until they saw the dark shadows that denoted the moving Sioux, coming to the attack.

It was all around the circle, and so they fell back rap-

idly, aroused the challenge of the wide-awake soldiers, and all pressed rapidly on into the fort, to find every man at his post and all ready for the attack.

The horses had been corraled for the night, and every man was ready to fight to the death.

On came the Indian circle, contracting its line as it came like a huge vampire to clutch its prey within its deadly folds.

Nearer and nearer, until within a hundred and fifty yards.

No sign came from the timber, and the redskins felt sure of a surprise.

They did not think the soldiers believed they would return.

Then came one long, piercing yell, and it was echoed in a mighty, appalling chorus from over four hundred savage throats.

With this yell of the red fiends, the ponies sprang forward for the rush.

But around the line came a circle of flame, and four score rifles and carbines flashed forth death upon the foe.

There was a lull as the carbines were being reloaded, broken only by the repeating rifles of the Boys in Buckskin rattling continuously, and they had been so placed around the fort that they came from all quarters.

The scouts, seven in number, for the wounded were at their posts, with the officers, who also had repeating rifles, brought into action a dozen of these dangerous weapons.

Then came a cheer from the soldiers, and another volley of carbines, followed by the rattle of revolvers, the yells of the redskins, war-cries of the scouts, and the cheering of the troopers.

It was an appalling moment, and only a moment it lasted, for the red columns were shattered, broken, and went reeling back to cover, unable to stand the storm of fire they had rushed upon.

There were gallant deeds done by those same warriors—braves carried off, dead and dying, by their comrades, but no one to mark their acts of daring.

Back to the timber on the river bank they rushed and staggered, and, in its coverts, beyond the range of the deadly repeating rifles, halted.

They were shattered, surprised, broken in spirit, yet revengeful.

Their queen had gone with them, and, unseen in the darkness, two horses had been shot under her.

She was still in her riding-habit, but now, retiring to the shelter made for her, she once more appeared in her buckskin garb, beaded and feathered.

She dyed her face red with paint, showing her braves that she was on the trail to kill.

The chiefs had believed that reinforcements had really come; but she had pointed out to them that the shots of

the palefaces were few but deadly, and the repeating rifles of the Buckskin Braves had done fearful execution.

She reminded them that there were braves coming to their aid from their village, and that the Sioux must win.

So the red line around the fort remained unbroken, cutting off all chance of sending for aid by the soldiers, and in the glare of day the Sioux lay down to rest, or sat gazing out upon the plain, where lay a score of dead horses they had been unable to bring off, and half a hundred ponies fallen under the fearful fire.

"We beat them off that time, and with heavy loss, Cody."

"Now, Powell, what is our loss?" said Fred Forrester, as the redskins were seen to re-enter their coverts and give up the fight, for the day, at least.

"Small, sir, for they held their fire, hoping to get into our works."

"There are two soldiers and a scout dead, one of our negro servants also, and a dozen men, more or less, seriously wounded," replied Surgeon Powell, who had made a rapid run around the camp.

"Poor fellows!" said Fred Forrester, feelingly; and then he asked:

"What did you say, Cody?"

"If the renegade queen has more warriors coming, we need our help, sir, with all dispatch."

"Should those Sioux now here charge in solid column, they would come in, in spite of all we can do, so I will leave to-night at dark and hasten on our force."

"It would be madness, Bill."

"Oh, no; I am not much use here, with my arm in a sling, and I can go through their lines."

"You could never get through, my dear Cody."

"Surgeon Powell has a wounded red bird caged, and his feathers and rig will do for me, and you know I speak Sioux like a native."

"In the night I can pass for a brave if spoken to, and so get through."

"But a horse can never go through."

"Oh, no, sir, but there are some four hundred Indian ponies to pick from, and may be I can hit upon one of Queen Renegade's fine animals, and if so I am in great luck."

"I suppose you will go, Bill, and you know best," said the captain in a tone that showed his regret, while Surgeon Powell added:

"Somehow, Fred, I don't think Cody is born to be scalped, and he has taken chances as desperate before, yes, worse chances, and if he can get through, it will surely hasten our fellows on, and every hour counts, for men, ammunition and food are dwindling fast."

"That's why I go," responded Buffalo Bill, and then he added:

"Now I'll get breakfast and go to sleep, and you, Frank, please rig up White Cloud's outfit for me the best you can."

With this the scout ate his breakfast, had his wound carefully dressed and lay down to sleep.

It was late in the afternoon when he awoke, perfectly rested, and his wound was again carefully dressed.

Then he tried on his Indian rig, and it was pronounced perfect.

After a good dinner, he was painted up by Surgeon Powell, donned White Cloud's costume, and just after nightfall sallied forth upon his desperate mission.

And all day long not a redskin had been seen by any one at the fort, except the dead braves that coyotes were snarling and fighting over, although there were enough for a feast.

CHAPTER IX.

WELL MET.

"Texas Jack!"

The words came from the lips of Buffalo Bill, just a second before the Texan had uttered his name, and the two friends rode rapidly toward each other.

"Well, Bill, how is it I find you here, when I thought you were in 'Fort Forlorn,' as we might call Captain Forrester's camp?"

"I left there last night, dressed up in Chief White Cloud's outfit, and I guess I haven't got the paint off my face yet, and here's the rig," and Buffalo Bill pointed to the Indian garb rolled up and tied to the redskin saddle he rode.

"You mean you came out through the lines dressed as a red?"

"Yes, and I played Injun, Jack, to the queen's taste, you bet.

"I got to the lines all right, and ran right upon a Sioux, who called to me.

"I replied gruffly and passed on, and although I saw a number lying around no one spoke.

"Soon I ran right upon the renegade queen's quarters, for there was her wickiup they had made for her and her horses.

"But she was not there, and that was my chance.

"I could not help taking a slip of paper from my pocket, and with my pencil I wrote her a note."

"What did you say, Bill?" asked Jack, deeply interested.

"Simply this:

"The renegade queen is anxious to be avenged upon Buffalo Bill, as she has sworn to be, and yet I come to her camp, take one of her horses and go to the fort after aid to bear her and her braves back to the mountains.'"

"You told her your errand?"

"Certainly, for she will know I cannot make the ride and return under four days, and I knew I would surely head off reinforcements before to-morrow, and thus give her a surprise."

"You are a cunning one, Bill; but that is her horse?"

"Yes, and an Indian saddle, for I borrowed it from a warrior whose horse was staked near.

"I tell you, Jack, I came through those redskins' lines in great shape."

"You generally do; but now let me tell you what I have done, and don't you forget it, but I am glad we have met, for we can just play a game that will beat Mister Lo at all points."

Texas Jack then told his story of how he had followed the Sioux courier and discovered that he had gone to Signal Mountain and signaled for five hundred warriors.

"Now, Bill, it will be late to-morrow night before they can reach the renegade queen, and if we meet with the troops to-day, or to-night, we can run a force of cavalry to the pass, through which they must come, and ambush them there.

"Then the rest can go on to the relief of Captain Forrester, and when the renegade queen has to get up and git, why, we can ambush them on their retreat, do you see, and thus strike a double blow.

"That is my plan, Bill."

"And a good one, and you can go with the force to head off the queen's reinforcements, while I will guide the rest of the troops to Captain Forrester's relief, and he needs help, too, for it was a close call night before last, Jack, and I only hope that last night they were as successful as we were the night before.

"That's a splendid fellow, Captain Forrester is, Jack."

"You bet he is, and a man to tie to every time, and if he gets out of this scrape all right, it will be a dozen feathers in his cap."

The horses of the two Braves in Buckskin had now had a short rest, and so they rode on together, the animal which Buffalo Bill had taken from the renegade queen proving to be a fine one; but he did not like his Indian saddle and often wished for his own.

When they again halted, Jack dressed the chief's wound, which was giving him some pain, and then they had a good meal, the Texan being the cook.

A nap of an hour sufficed for rest for them, and on they went, following the trail by which they knew the reinforcements must come.

Late in the afternoon they both uttered a cry together, for their eyes had fallen upon a party of horsemen.

"There they come, Jack!"

"Hurrah, Bill! hurrah!"

And the scouts halted, to give their horses rest.

In half an hour Captain Roe came up at a canter, and the scouts were greeted with a cheer by the cavalry.

In a few words Buffalo Bill told all that had happened, Assistant Surgeon Dillon the while dressing his wounded arm, and then Jack made known what he had to say and his plan.

"If Forrester was not taken last night he can hold out until to-morrow night, you think, Cody?"

"Yes, Captain Roe."

"The Sioux have about four hundred and fifty against him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Lieutenant Bennett?"

"Yes, sir."

"Send two of your best-mounted couriers back to hasten on Captain Ames.

"Send two in case one breaks down, and have him say to Captain Ames that another force of redskins takes off from the relief of Forrester one hundred and fifty men; but that I push on fifty men to his aid, hoping they may arrive in time.

"I shall take one gun with me with Lieutenant Germaine, letting the other piece go with the fifty men.

"Say to Captain Ames to spare not his men, but to push to the aid of Captain Forrester with all haste, and to say to Captain Forrester that when the renegade queen and her force are set going for the village that he will find my force between them and their retreat; so rush them hard upon my ambush."

Lieutenant Bennett had written on a tablet as fast as Captain Roe had talked, and putting the dispatch in an envelope, called up the couriers and sent them back with all haste.

"Do not spare your cattle, and if they fail you get down to it on foot, men, for lives hang on your speed," called out Captain Roe, and away sped the two men.

Then the men went into camp for a rest, and the division was made, of fifty cavalry and one gun to go on to Captain Forrester's aid, and the remainder of a hundred and fifty troopers to push on with the other piece under the guidance of Texas Jack, to head off the force of braves coming from the Sioux village.

"It will be a show of aid only that will be wanted to set those fellows besieging Forrester in motion," remarked Captain Roe, and Buffalo Bill replied:

"Yes, sir, and the one gun will do much; but if we find Captain Forrester still holding out, let me suggest that you wait without showing yourself, for the infantry, and then we can attack with a force to do some damage.

"I can scout on ahead and return and report how matters are."

"You are right, Cody, and I'll do it; but now let us be on the move."

The two bands of troopers then separated, the large force under Captain Roe guided by Texas Jack to ambush the force of redskins coming to the aid of the renegade queen, and the small force under Lieutenant Bennett going on with Buffalo Bill as guide to the relief of brave Fred Forrester and his men.

CHAPTER X.

DEVIL DICK AND THE LADY SPORT.

I will now return to other characters and scenes in my story, which must not be forgotten, the lady sport and those about her in Gold Pocket City.

When Devil Dick's arrival at The Roost was known a damper fell upon many hearts.

They seemed to know that there would be trouble, and of a very serious nature.

Of course he meant to gamble, and to win, and he would naturally play with the lady sport.

He was believed to be a card sharp, and yet he must not cheat the lady sport was the verdict of all.

Then many recalled her scene with Bravo Ben and concluded that she was fully able to take care of herself, so they had best not interfere.

The desperado, on account of having to meet a lady, it was supposed, had spruced up.

He had bought at the store a new flannel shirt, a black scarf, dove-colored sombrero, and the camp barber had trimmed up his hair and given him a clean shave.

"He'll be all ready fer buryin' ef some one lays him out," said one.

But the man still looked like a terror.

His face, scarred terribly, was by no means handsome, and his eyes as he entered Poker Hall roamed around the room as though searching for prey.

His belt was not new, for there must be no hitch in his drawing a revolver or his knife.

Devil Dick took no chances.

He meant to be always sure.

Games were going on, but the lady sport had not arrived, so Devil Dick went over and took a seat in the shadow, where he could see her well.

No one asked him to play, and yet if he had decided to join in a game not a soul would have objected.

Soon after he entered, Hazard Harry came in, and many eyes were upon the two.

Hazard Harry had said in the hotel that the lady sport should not be cheated or bullied even by Devil Dick, and those who knew Hazard Harry were well aware that he was not a man to make an idle threat.

He had also rigged up in his best, and spying Devil Dick went over in his vicinity and took a seat.

"Join us, Harry?" asked a man at a table near.

"No, I won't play just now," was the reply.

"Waiting for the lady sport, eh?" said Devil Dick, quickly.

"Yes."

"So am I," and no more was said.

Soon there came a movement of the curtains over the window, it was drawn aside and the lady sport appeared.

She looked her very best, and that means that she was beautiful.

She was dressed in Mexican costume, but seemed to have taken greater pains to appear well on that evening.

She carried a little satchel, with money and cards, in her hand, and, with a bow meant for all, sprang from the window to the floor and took her seat.

A cheer greeted her, and she bowed sweetly, and then seemed prepared for business.

At first sight of her, Devil Dick winced, as though he had been hurt.

He half arose to his feet, his scarred face flushing crimson, and then turning to the hue of death.

His teeth were set close together, his eyes glared upon the face of the woman, and he looked like a wild beast at bay.

"My God! my God!" came through his shut teeth, and he trembled violently as he gasped:

"No, no, it cannot be!"

In the coming of the lady sport, no one had longer noticed Devil Dick, so his emotion was not seen by any one except Landlord Boniface, or Bony, as he was called, who was in front of him.

Then came in her musical voice, and broken foreign accent, the query of the lady sport:

"I am ready for business, gentlemen.

"Who dare play with the queen of luck?"

She glanced over the room, and her eyes seemed to meet each pair that they were turned upon.

There was a smile upon her face, a winning look that was inscrutable, and many intended to accept her challenge, if only to lose their money to one so beautiful, when in a voice of thunder came the response from Devil Dick:

"I dare, by Heaven!"

CHAPTER XI.

PLAYED TO WIN.

All started at the words of Devil Dick, accustomed as were the miners of Gold Pocket City to loud voices, oaths and outcries.

But the lady sport did not move.

Her eyes turned upon the man as he came toward her, and his gaze met hers.

The miners all saw then that she paled, and more thought that she started, as though to fly from him.

But, whatever her intention, it was quickly checked, and she bent over and picked up her handkerchief, which she had dropped.

If the act was intentional, it was successful, for it brought the color back into her face by her stooping.

Then she was face to face with Devil Dick when she looked up.

"You will play with me, then, sir," she said, with a foreign accent more marked than was her wont, and her eyes did not at first meet those of the desperado.

"You defied any man to play with you, did you not?" he asked, in a low tone.

"Yes."

"Then I take up your gantlet, and will play."

"For what amount, sir?"

"Any sum, for I do not care."

She fingered the cards quietly, and said:

"Shall we not make it a four-handed game?"

"No."

"But my stakes may be larger, and I have a right to win if I can."

"Yes; and I say name the sum.

"I wish to play with you, you alone, and I do not care what game it is, or for what the stakes."

"You are a reckless player, then?"

"No, a safe player, but a game one."

"I warn you, lady sport, that Devil Dick is the worst hand with cards in the mines, and plays to win."

The warning came from Hazard Harry, a man well known in the town as a gambler, and he had his hand conveniently near his revolver-butt as he spoke; but, to the surprise of all, Devil Dick did not even turn toward him as he said in Spanish:

"Your friend says right, señorita; I do play to win, in whatever I undertake."

Instantly came the reply, in low, musical Spanish:

"So do I, señor, and I never lose."

"That we shall see," responded the desperado, and he drew from his pocket a large roll of banknotes and placed them upon the table.

Hazard Harry and Landlord Boniface had both noticed the few words of Spanish spoken between them, and the landlord thought that he detected a look of disappointment in the face of the man at the woman's prompt reply, while Hazard Harry distinctly heard the muttered words:

"I am wrong; it is not she."

"In that roll I have several thousand dollars, fair gam-

bler; so let us make it a game for five hundred to begin with."

"That will suit me, señor," was the reply, and she placed the cards upon the table and soon after began the game.

All other games in the hall had come to an end, for there was too much interest felt by one and all in seeing the lady sport and Devil Dick engaged in gambling for others to keep on with their playing.

Then, too, there seemed a chance that Hazard Harry intended to chip in in some way as the champion of the lady sport, and by common consent an open space was left around him, should the desperado choose to send a bullet in that direction.

The woman was calm but smiling, the man stern and cynical.

There, behind the lady sport, sat Jersey, who, a privileged character with her, had slipped in at the window, having come from looking after her horses.

The game ended with Devil Dick the loser.

He did not wince, and every eye was upon him.

"You are lucky, lady sport.

"Try it again with a thousand at stake," and he threw down the required number of bills.

"Very well, sir," was the quiet reply, and another game was played and lost by Devil Dick.

Still he did not wince, and the crowd wondered.

He was not like the Devil Dick they had known.

"There are fifteen hundred for this game," he coolly said, laying the remainder of the bills upon the table.

The lady sport covered the amount with her money, and a third game was lost by the desperado.

There was a murmur of applause, and yet the gambler did not turn upon the crowd.

"I am not broke yet, fair sport, so stake two thousand on the next game," and he thrust his hand into an inner pocket and returned with another roll of bills.

"Be careful, lady sport, for Devil Dick is too quiet to mean good."

Again the warning came from Hazard Harry, and again his hand was ready to draw to back up his words.

Hazard Harry was already a hero in the eyes of all, to thus beard the desperate Devil Dick.

But, as before, the desperado did not notice him, more than to glance toward him to see who it was that spoke.

"Thank you, sir, but I do not fear a card sharp, nor dread even Devil Dick, whom all seem to fear so," was the smiling reply.

"No, I am not dangerous.

"A lamb could lead me, if she goes about it right," replied Devil Dick, with a rough laugh.

The woman winced at this, but covered the two thousand dollars on the table for the next game.

Then the two played slowly and cautiously, and once more luck was on the side of the woman.

Still Devil Dick showed no sign of annoyance, and only said:

"I am gone broke to-night, lady; but we will meet again, for, like yourself, I am a born card sharp, only you are the sharpest of the two."

"By Heaven, do you accuse the lady of cheating?"

Hazard Harry again it was, and he was seemingly anxious to pick a quarrel with the desperado.

"Yes, lady sport, we will meet again," and Devil Dick seemed not to have heard Hazard Harry's words, as he continued:

"Now, good-night, and luck attend you.

"Now, sir, our game begins."

With the last words he had turned quick as a flash and faced Hazard Harry, who was caught off his guard.

There were two sharp reports, one a second before the other, and Devil Dick backed out of the room, a revolver in each hand, as though at bay, and Hazard Harry lay dead on the floor, a bullet in his brain.

"Gentlemen, I played the last game to win—good-night."

With this, Devil Dick backed out of the door and was gone

CHAPTER XII.

AFTER MANY YEARS.

The excitement following the departure of Devil Dick was intense in Poker Hall.

A dozen revolvers had been drawn, yet no man had courted a shot from the desperado by risking a shot at him.

Then there was a spirit of fair play, too, for Hazard Harry had seemed to urge on a fracas and had already drawn his revolver for use, only was not as quick as his foe, who even then caught him off his guard.

The bullet of Hazard Harry had gone no one in the hall knew where; but Devil Dick knew, for it had lodged in the fleshy part of his arm.

Hazard Harry had been borne off by friends, and for some reason the lady sport had not cared to play longer, though the excitement soon blew over.

It could not be that she was unnerved by the death of Hazard Harry, after having herself thrown her bowie into the hand and arm of Bravo Ben a short while before.

But she refused to play, retired to her cabin and dismissed Jersey, the boy she had saved from Bravo Ben, who followed her, as she said she wished to be alone.

In the meantime Devil Dick had gone to the drug-store and bade "Doctor Pills" extract the bullet.

He did not quiver at the probe, or the withdrawing of the bullet, and after it was dressed bought some bandages and arnica from Pills, paid him handsomely for his services, buckled on his haversack and blanket and left.

He made his way to Bravo Ben's cabin, and found that worthy turning on his cot with pain.

"Waal, did yer see her?"

"Yes."

"You went to ther hall?"

"I did."

"And seen her?"

"Yes."

"Yer is back soon."

"There was no need to remain longer."

"Good Lord! did yer chip in so soon?"

"Yes, she won just five thousand dollars from me."

"Ther deuce! did yer have it ter lose?"

"Oh, yes."

"And you kilt her?"

"Not I."

"Why not?"

"Because I am not the man to kill that woman and I pity any other man that does do so and I find him out."

"Lordy! you weakened on her beauty?"

"No; but I will not do your dirty work for you, so name the sum you value your services at in saving my life and I'll pay you."

"Does yer mean it?"

"Yes."

"Waal, it's worth a thousand, for I'll have ter pay another man to do ther job."

"What job?" and Devil Dick counted out one thousand dollars and placed it on the table by Bravo Ben.

"Ter kill ther woman."

Instantly Devil Dick was upon his feet, his eyes blazing, and dropping his hands upon either shoulder of the wounded man he said in a voice quivering with passion:

"I say no; and, Bravo Ben, if that woman dies in ther mines I'll burn you at the stake, so help me God!

"Hear me, man, and heed!

"I have squared, at your own price, the debt I owed you and now I am free from gratitude even.

"But let me tell you that no one shall harm that woman, and if aught happens to her, no matter by whose hand, I'll track you like a bloodhound for revenge."

He said no more, but turned on his heel and left Bravo Ben trembling with terror.

The next morning the lady sport looked pale, and Jersey suggested a ride.

"I'll go, Jersey," she replied to his invitation, "but alone, for somehow I am not pleasant company just now,"

and mounting Yellow Chief, as she had named her claybank, she rode rapidly up the mountain trail.

She had reached a lonely point, where there was a good lookout which Jersey had shown her and was just turning into it when a man's voice called out:

"Hold on, Ruby, I wish to speak to you."

The woman reeled in her saddle, clutched at the air and fell into the arms of Devil Dick.

"She has fainted; well, it was a little sudden, I admit," he said, as he hitched her horse and placed her upon a mossy bank near.

Then he took water from a canteen swung to his knapsack and bathed her face, and chafed her hands until her eyes opened and met his.

She started to her feet and cried:

"You are Oscard Ballard?"

"Yes, Ruby," and his voice was low and musical, almost pathetic.

"I feared it last night."

"Feared it?" and there was anger in his tone.

"Yes, for I cared not to meet you again, Oscar."

"Once you told me you loved me, and you were my little girl sweetheart.

"But all went wrong with me, Ruby, and I became a wanderer.

"I went North, South, East and West, to other lands, was a sailor, a soldier and now am a tramp, like unto a vagabond.

"But I could not drive your image from my memory, and so I worked for you to get wealth to one day lay at your feet with my heart, and ask you to be my wife."

His voice was full of pathos, and there was a look in his eyes unlike what was usually seen there.

She shuddered and he said, quickly:

"You abhor me, for I am so scarred, so hideous, and yet once you called me your handsome lover; but I have passed through enough, Ruby, in my hunt for gold to kill a dozen men.

"But gold I sought, and gold I have, for I am rich, and my love, my riches, I offer to you."

He showed his weakness just there, for if he was rich, then why should she care how hideous he was, and so she said:

"I did not shudder at your appearance, Oscar, for it is your heart, not the face, I recall; but I shuddered at the story I have to tell you."

"Then you, too, have suffered, Ruby?"

"Ah! so much."

"You must have, for me to find you here, a gambler, and known as Bowie-knife Bessie."

"That is a part I am playing, and for revenge, Oscar.

"Let me tell you that my mother forced me to marry

one, a cadet at West Point, who inveigled me into his clutches by a mock marriage.

"He was rich, and never owned me before the world as his wife, and when my mother died I had to seek him to support me.

"I sought him at the fort where he is stationed, but he drove me from him, and it was through him that my poor brother Benson was forced to desert and then be shot for outlawry.

"He gave me some money and I devoted it to revenge.

"I was an adept at cards, could always ride and drive well, and you taught me in the long ago how to throw a knife with deadly aim.

"So I came here to gamble, to get money and seek my revenge upon my husband.

"Now, Oscar Ballard, if you love me, put that man, my husband, Fred Forrester, out of the way, and the day after I will become your wife."

"I will do it, by Heaven!"

"Until then we are strangers.

"He is at Fort Fairview, and you know where to find me, when he is dead," and the beautiful and false-tongued plotter—for such she was at heart—sprang into her saddle and rode rapidly away, well knowing that she had set a bloodhound upon the trail of Fred Forrester.

And as she rode along she muttered between her teeth:

"His wife, yes; then a few drops of poison will make me a widow, and a rich one."

CHAPTER XIII.

ONLY A RUSE.

As on the night before, the Sioux surrounding the little fort in the timber made another charge upon the brave defenders just before dawn.

But Captain Forrester had all the day before, and until late in the night, had been strengthening his position.

He had allowed those who were to watch at night to sleep all day and not work, so that they would be wide awake for their duty to perform.

There had been more trees felled, and the ragged branches had been placed around the fortification to serve as a kind of *chevaux-de-frise*, which he knew the ponies of the Indians would not run upon.

Then earth had been thrown into the openings to protect the defenders from bullets and arrows, and as soon as it was dark three dozen men had gone out with spades and shovels to dig holes, like postholes, to throw the ponies in their charge.

And these were dug within easy range of the works.

Water buckets were filled at sunset and placed around the fortifications, the guards went on duty, going out as

far as the newly-dug holes, while the braves in buckskin scouted on some distance further.

All had watched the departure of Buffalo Bill with deepest anxiety, and Surgeon Frank Powell had asserted, after he had been gone a couple of hours, that he surely had not been captured, for if so, some redskin would have given vent to a war-whoop of delight.

In fact, not a redskin had been seen during the entire day, and yet the defenders of the fort were not deceived, for they knew they were there, but pretended to have left to draw them out.

So the night passed away until an hour before dawn, when Fred Forrester, who was half asleep as he sat near the works, was awakened by a touch on his arm.

"It is you, Frank?"

"Yes, I have been out on a scout, and they are coming, but slowly.

"I ordered the scouts and sentinels in, so be ready."

"All is in readiness," and the captain waited until the signal agreed upon, a war cry of one of the scouts.

The redskins sprang to their feet and leaped upon their horses at the cry, for it told them that they were discovered.

Then the charge was made, and like an avalanche the Sioux rushed on, and just as the leading ponies went down in a mass, by falling into the holes, the fire from the troops opened, and once more the redskins were beaten off.

The idea of Fred Forrester in digging those holes had proven a success, for it threw those behind in a panic to see their comrades go down so suddenly before them.

When the dawn broke, it showed the Sioux others of their dead upon the field, and their loss in ponies, from broken limbs, had been very great.

But it revealed the cause of their sudden defeat, and the chiefs congregated together for another pow-wow with the renegade queen, the result of which was that by noon the whole force was seen to file away over a distant rise of prairie and disappear.

A cheer broke from the troopers, but Surgeon Powell said, quietly:

"Do not cheer yet, boys, for those redskins are only playing smart.

"They will not go and leave their dead upon the field, and, besides, they have sent for reinforcements and will return with a much heavier force."

"Yes, and I would not be surprised if they even left us alone to-night, to carry out their cunning ruse the better," remarked Captain Forrester, and he added:

"I hate to see those poor animals suffer, and wish we could spare the ammunition to shoot them."

"I'll take Indian ammunition and do it," responded the surgeon, and he sprang upon his horse and rode out upon

the field, and swooping from his saddle, picked up a bow and some quivers of arrows, with which he hastily put an end to the misery of the suffering brutes, for the surgeon scout was a dead shot with bow and arrows.

Then he hailed for a squad of soldiers to be sent out and the dead Indians were buried, and the party returned to the fort.

"Their scouts are watching us," he remarked to Fred Forrester as he returned.

Thus the day passed and another night came on. The horses had gotten a good feed on the grass near the timber, so were all right; but the provisions had run low, and there was no game to help out.

The force had lost a dozen killed, and fully a score were wounded, and could only do service in an emergency.

White Cloud had recuperated rapidly, under the kind care of the surgeon scout, who made up his mind that when the danger of attack was over the chief should find a chance to escape, for he had not forgotten the service rendered him by the redskin leader once, long ago.

That night, as Captain Forrester had predicted, passed without an attack; but the little garrison was not to be caught napping, for they knew that the Sioux had not gone far, and that their scouts were watching them only waiting for them to leave their stronghold to pounce upon them.

When morning came and no troops appeared, all began to be most anxious.

Had the scout, Roy Rockland, reached Fort Fairview? Had not some accident befallen him?

Had the chief of scouts also escaped?

Such queries were going the rounds with some anxiety.

Provisions were about used up, ammunition was at low ebb and the future looked gloomy indeed.

"To-night the closest watch must be kept," came the order from Captain Forrester, and it was obeyed.

CHAPTER XIV.

A QUEEN AT BAY.

Well was it for the garrison in the timber that Captain Forrester's order for a close watch to be kept was obeyed, for at dawn there came a roaring, rushing sound, and in one massive, solid column, a hundred yards in width, came the Sioux upon the little garrison.

The rifles and carbines belched forth, and redskins and ponies went down; but on they came with appalling yells, shots from their firearms and showers of arrows, and it seemed as though the end had come for the brave defenders.

Up to the rocks they came, and there stood the devoted

leader with his little band, ready to die like the true men they were.

But a loud report shook the ground, another and another, and bursting shells fell into the Indian mass, while following them came a ringing cheer from men of the gallant —th cavalry, and half a hundred brave horsemen swept like the wind over the prairie right upon the frightened, startled Sioux.

Back behind them came answering cheers from two hundred throats, and again the three pieces of light artillery flashed forth, and with yells of terror from what they called the "wagon guns," the savage force under the renegade queen broke in wild disorder, in the recovering moment to them of their success, and fled from the scene.

"You are able to go now, White Cloud, so throw on this cloak, put on this hat and come with me."

So said Frank Powell to the White Cloud, who, five minutes after, mounted upon a fleet horse, though he was still weak from his wounds, was flying across the prairie after his shattered squadron of redskin cavalry.

And out of the fort, mounted and ready for the fray, with half a hundred gallant troopers at his back, had ridden Fred Forrester.

He was met by Lieutenant Bennett, who said, hastily:

"I have orders to report to you, Captain Forrester, from Captain Roe, who has gone on a flank move toward Signal Mountain under the guidance of Texas Jack to ambush a large force of Sioux on the way to reinforce the renegade queen.

"I have fifty men, sir, of the —th, and Lieutenant Germaine is here with three guns, the fourth having gone with Captain Roe."

"And I, too, have to report to you, Captain Forrester, with two hundred of the —th Infantry.

"Permit me to congratulate you upon your gallant defense of your fort."

"Thank you, sir, and permit me, gentlemen, to thank you for your timely rescue, for had you not come not a man of my little garrison would now be alive.

"But who was sent to take command, may I ask?"

"Such a frank acknowledgment of the service they had rendered completely took the three officers, Ames, Bennett and Germaine, aback, and the former said:

"You are the ranking officer, Captain Forrester, and we await your orders!"

"You shall have them, gentlemen—it is dawn now, so I'll rush on after the Sioux, leaving one gun, a company of infantry and half a dozen cavalymen here, for there are wounded to look to."

Five minutes after, the cavalry, under Fred Forrester, were in rapid pursuit, with two pieces of artillery, and the infantry were coming on at a forced march as a reserve.

From the tops of the prairie rise, the two guns would

open fire, pitching shells after the flying Sioux, who had become terror-stricken, and fled at the utmost speed of their ponies.

Buffalo Bill and half a dozen of his men had already gone on, and suddenly dashing into a fringe of timber ahead of his men the chief of scouts drew rein with a suddenness that threw his horse on his haunches.

"My God! she has killed herself," he cried, as he sprang from his horse and ran toward the renegade queen, whose horse had been wounded and fallen with her, and believing herself about to be captured she had turned her revolver toward her bosom and pulled the trigger.

"Yes, I have killed myself, Buffalo Bill, and it is a fitting ending for a renegade queen, is it not?"

"Perhaps the wound may not be fatal, and—Ho, Nelse, ride back for Surgeon Powell."

"It is useless, for I have my death wound, and you would have me live to hang me?"

"Indeed, no; you wrong me, for wicked though you were, you are a woman, and I could do you no harm.

"I held pity for your husband, and I do for you, and God knows I would not see you die thus, and were it in my power to save you, gladly would I do so."

"Buffalo Bill, there are tears in your eyes, a quiver in your voice, that are not feigned.

"You did your duty in hunting my husband to his doom, in tracking me to death.

"I loved him, and that made me what I am, a renegade from my people.

"I thank God I am believed by those who knew me in the past to be dead, so no one will know me as I am.

"I am dying, and I leave to you this ring; he gave it to me, and you keep it for my sake—and more, do me one great favor."

"I will gladly do so," and the voice of the scout was choked with emotion.

"Bear my body to Eagle Canyon and bury it by the side of him for whom I gave up all, and now my life, as a renegade, a foe to my own race."

"I will, so help me Heaven," came in the deep, earnest voice of the chief of scouts.

CHAPTER XV.

MAJOR DENTON TAKES THE FIELD.

"Well, wife, Forrester is certainly getting all the chances of promotion, and his pluck and nerve deserve it," said Major Denton, the second in command at Fort Fairview, the morning after the departure of Captain Roe with the relief for the besieged men under Captain Fred Forrester's command.

"Somehow I hope he will extricate himself before the

relief reaches him, for some of his foes among the officers are none too good to make him feel it," Mrs. Denton responded.

"I only hope he'll be able to escape with his command; but from what that new scout, Roy Rockland, said, he certainly is in a desperately dangerous situation," said Kate Kemmerley.

"Well, yes, he is, I admit; but then I have perfect faith in Forrester to do what is best, and his daring and genius will help him out.

"But what did you think of Roy Rockland?"

And the major smiled.

Neither of them knew anything of Rockland's former history as an outlaw.

"A gentleman by birth and education, a gambler by profession, is my criticism of him," Mrs. Denton remarked, naively.

"Yes; a gentleman, certainly, courtly as a Chesterfield, well informed, and a man who has seen much of the world, and one whom I regret to see acknowledges himself to be a professional gambler.

"What do you think, Kate?" said he, addressing Kate Kemmerley, a young lady whose dead father had been the major's best friend and who was now his ward.

"I hardly know what to think, guardian.

"He acted so modestly throughout, and when invited to be seated at your table, frankly confessed his former calling, so as not to place you in a false position.

"I think he is one who has seen much of misfortune and sorrow, and became a gambler, as he says, from sheer force of circumstances."

"Well said, Kate; but yet he is a man to be proud of from all Forrester wrote of him, and you know the captain is not given to gush.

"I must go over and talk with the general, for several couriers have arrived this morning, and I do not exactly like the situation of affairs, for that renegade queen may be on the warpath with fifteen hundred Sioux warriors at her back, to avenge her renegade husband's death."

"Then you really think there is danger along the line?" asked Mrs. Denton.

"Certainly there is, my dear, and neither of you ladies must put your pretty noses beyond the stockade wall until I give you permission."

With a laugh the gallant old major buckled on his sword, and donning his hat went to report to his commandant.

Colonel Cassidy had received dispatches from the other posts and settlements, as also from the mines, stating that couriers had arrived from Captain Forrester, up in the Sioux country, warning them of danger, and asking protection from Fort Fairview, for rumors were coming in that numerous large bands of Indians were on the war-

path, and committing depredations and untold acts of cruelty.

"This is all nonsense, for not an Indian has been seen except by Forrester and Buffalo Bill's party, I am sure.

"With those two men between us and the Sioux country, I fear no advance without being notified.

"But I will send off a dozen couriers to report at each point that Captain Forrester, with a large force, is on the trail of the Indians and watching them, but that it will be well for the border lines of posts and settlements to have their men in readiness to move if needed," and Colonel Cassidy spoke to Major Denton, who responded:

"Yes, sir, for the outposts are in no danger of a surprise, not with men like Forrester and Cody between them and the enemy, and the men you sent last night to Captain Forrester will soon straighten out the Sioux and whip them into subjection."

But still there could not but be a certain anxiety felt by all at the situation, for it was known that the Sioux could put fifteen hundred warriors in the saddle, all mounted and armed, and yet keep a large reserve in their village, or to hang in the rear of an advance in large force under their chiefs.

That the renegade queen meant to avenge her husband's death all felt sure, and a woman's capacity for mischief and devilry when aroused to it, many were aware of, so a general feeling of disquiet rested upon those at Fort Fairview from Colonel Cassidy down to the smallest drummer-boy.

Then, too, the colonel did not have as large a force as he could wish, for left in the fort there were not of all arms over eight hundred men.

Those who had marched away, too, were the flower of the troops, and with such officers as Captains Tabor, Roe and Ames, Surgeons Powell and Dillon, and Lieutenants Germaine, Bennett, and others in deadly peril, not to speak of the men, the family circles at the fort, from highest to lowest could not but feel anxious.

As for Captain Fred Forrester, those who longed to have no harm befall him could be easily numbered among the officers and their wives.

And yet he had a few friends, true as steel, and they hoped that he would return with honor, that would bring another blush of shame to the cheeks of his traducers.

There was one whose heart was sorely troubled on his account, and that one was Kate Kennerley.

Their friendship had been a strange one indeed; for to her it had seemed more than friendship, and yet not a word of love had he ever uttered to her.

Days passed away, and yet no report came from the fort.

No courier arrived with news of a victory.

No word came that Fred Forrester and his gallant band had been rescued and the Sioux beaten back to their mountain stronghold.

Captains Roe and Ames had orders to send a courier back on their arrival; but they had not done so.

Had the whole command—Forrester and his men and his relief, with Buffalo Bill's braves in buckskin—all been wiped out?

Could it be that five hundred gallant boys in blue had met with defeat, annihilation?

The question was unanswered, and so Colonel Cassidy called his officers together, and Major Denton asked to take the field with a flying force.

His request was granted, and, with two companies of cavalry, four of infantry mounted for the march, and two field guns, he set off to the aid of those who had gone before, or to strike a bitter blow to avenge them, if, as many feared, a terrible fate had overwhelmed them.

And upon Fort Fairview fell a gloom that those left behind could not shake off; and such is human nature, that many censured Fred Forrester for it all, as he had been the one to go upon a scout and bring the others into peril to go to his relief.

CHAPTER XVI.

PUSHED TO THE WALL.

It looked sad indeed to Fred Forrester as he dashed up, with Surgeon Powell by his side—for in a fight the surgeon scout left his assistants to care for the wounded while he went to the front—to see the renegade queen lying upon the ground dying.

The scout had moved her to a mossy bank and smoothed her barbaric costume about her, while he had placed his blanket beneath her head.

Her voice had grown huskier as she had talked to him, until at last it sunk to a whisper.

But her eyes beckoned to him to bend down, and she said in a tone hardly audible:

"Hold my hand, Cody."

He grasped the tiny hand in his and thus knelt by her side when Fred Forrester dashed up.

A look of pain flashed over the face of the officer, which changed to anger as he sternly said:

"What man dared do this act?"

"Speak, Cody, for I shall have him shot for it."

Ere the scout could reply, to his surprise the eyes of the renegade queen opened, and with an effort came the answer in a firm voice:

"I took my own life, and it is better so—I deserve my fate."

The eyes closed again and with a little gasp her life ended.

Calling to one of his men, Captain Forrester ordered him to guard the body, and sent after an ambulance in which to remove it to Eagle Canyon, when Buffalo Bill made known the woman's dying request.

"Yes, let her be buried there, as she wished, and she said truly that it was best that she died in the manner she did, for what could we have done with her?"

"Did she say aught about herself, Cody?"

"Nothing more than that her love for her husband had made her what she was, and that her friends already believed her dead."

"May I ask for a small escort to go with one of my scouts to Eagle Canyon with the body, and I will meet them there to-night, for I wish to press on with you now?"

"You are wounded, Bill, and had better drop out of the pursuit."

"Oh no, for my arm is not very painful, and I wish to know if Texas Jack's plan panned out as he hoped."

"Very well," and Captain Forrester gave the order, and they pushed on rapidly after the cavalry in pursuit of the Sioux.

The retreat of the redskins had now become a chase, for with their queen missing, White Cloud dead or a prisoner, Panther Eye dead, and their forces cut up terribly, the Indians were straining every nerve to reach the force sent to join them, and which they hoped would check their foes and turn the tide in their favor.

Gradually they became less scattered, and verging toward a given point were soon in column, flying column though it was.

Then they saw how they had suffered, and their faces darkened with hatred and fury.

Behind them came the cavalry, the rested horses of Fred Forrester and his men in advance, and behind his mounted relief force, with two pieces of artillery, which the Indians the more greatly feared.

At any rise in the prairie suitable, the guns would be unlimbered, aimed and fired, and a shell would burst over the heads of the flying redskins, killing, wounding and spreading terror among them.

So the chase went on for several hours, and then a halt was called by Fred Forrester to rest his horses and let the stragglers come up.

But the Indians pressed on, urging their tired ponies forward with quirt and spur.

They had tried to bear away their wounded and dead, but this double weight on their ponies retarded them, and, as it was, some of the braves were dismounted and flying along by holding to the tails of their comrades' ponies, with here and there one mounted up behind another.

Buffalo Bill had ridden to a ridge and was looking ahead with his glass to his eyes.

Suddenly he hailed Captain Forrester to come to him, and hardly had he done so when the deep boom of artillery fell on their ears.

One shot, then another, followed by the sharp, ringing sound of a bursting shell.

"Bravo for Roe! he has headed them off!" cried Cody, and the Indians five miles ahead were seen dashing back out of a canyon, and endeavoring to flank the lofty range of hills by swerving to the right.

"Yes, Roe has been lying in wait and has pounced upon them."

"Poor wretches! they are between two fires now."

"Sound boots and saddles, bugler, for we must press on and teach them a lesson, bitter though it is, and cruel though it seems."

"War is a terrible thing, Powell," and Captain Forrester seemed to shrink from the red punishment he was giving the Indians.

"They must learn the bitter lesson, Fred, that savagery must yield to civilization, the weak to the strong," responded Frank Powell, though he, too, reveled not in the carnage.

"The fight is over now, so I'll ask to go to Eagle Canyon, Captain Forrester, and join you back at Fort Forno, as the boys call it," said Buffalo Bill, who cared not to fight a fallen foe longer.

"All right, Cody, and I only wish I could accompany you.

"Mark the unfortunate woman's grave in case some one may turn up who knows her," and the young captain pressed on to meet his victorious companies under Captain Roe.

The Indians, brought to bay, had turned and fought like demons, and it was not until Captain Forrester led a charge in person directly into their retreat, that they left their ponies, clambered up the steep rocks and scattered through the hills, where horses could not follow them.

"A grand victory, Captain Forrester, and may get you a majority," said Captain Roe, warmly, as the fight ended.

"Ah, Roe, it is yours, Ames', Germaine's and Bennett's fight, for I owe my relief to you all, and but set the ball in motion by being caught in a trap.

"But what about your plot to ambush this relief force?"

"That was Texas Jack's idea, and they walked into the trap like sheep.

"We opened with artillery and carbines, then charged with revolvers and sabers, and I verily believe those Sioux are running yet.

"They lost heavily, and my loss was slight, and we captured a couple of hundred ponies.

"Getting anxious about you, we left the ambush and came on, and then came upon your race, the redskin fugitives believing us to be their friends, I guess.

"They will remember this day for many a year, and keep up in their stronghold.

"But, have you seen their queen?"

"She is dead, and by her own hand, when she saw the fight went against her.

"She told Cody when dying that she was beaten at all points, her relief was in full flight, and so she died."

"But you will press on?"

"Oh, yes; when Ames comes up with his infantry I will mount his men on the Indian ponies, for we have captured more than enough, and press on into the Indian country to intimidate them and show that we can punish them when they force us to do so."

That night the infantry came up, and after a good rest the next morning Captain Forrester, mounting his foot soldiers, pressed on after the flying redskins; but he did not, as he had hoped, on account of his wounded arm, leave Cody behind, for that cunning scout seemed to suspect what the young captain would do, and, after burying

the renegade queen by the side of her husband in Eagle Canyon, came on after the troops, and was ready to act as guide up into a land which, beyond Signal Mountain, none of the braves in buckskin had yet penetrated.

As this march is a matter of border history, I need only say that Captain Forrester forced the Sioux to break up their village and penetrate still farther fastnesses, where White Cloud became their leader, and was a conservative one toward the palefaces, for he had not forgotten his love for the renegade queen nor his gratitude to Surgeon Powell, who gave him his life by setting him free.

And back toward Fort Fairview, with flying colors, marched the victorious boys in blue, to meet at "Fort Forlorn" Major Denton and his gallant rescuers, who had solved the mystery of no courier arriving at the fort by finding the bodies of two of them slain and scalped by the trail, evidently ambushed by some small band of roving Sioux.

CHAPTER XVII.

FRED FORRESTER'S RESOLVE.

From "Fort Forlorn" Colonel Cassidy received by courier, from Major Denton, the first news that had come since the relief had departed to join Fred Forrester.

When the soldier courier was seen coming across the prairie, all was excitement in the fort, and palefaces flushed with hope that he would bring good news.

His horse had been hard-ridden, his own face showed fatigue, but he reported promptly to the commandant and delivered his dispatches.

All waited patiently the reading of those dispatches, and then came the order to call the troops together, and the adjutant read the major's report aloud, amid cheers from the garrison.

The major told of how he had found two dead couriers, and afterward learned that they had been sent by Captain Forrester, reporting his rescue, and again that the Sioux had been terribly cut up and were being pursued to their own country.

The major also went on to say that he had found a garrison at "Fort Forlorn," and had heard the story of the gallant defense and rescue, and that he had sent a company of cavalry and two companies of mounted infantry to follow Forrester's trail and serve as a support to him in case of his being forced to retreat, while he, with the

remainder of his force, would camp at "Fort Forlorn" as a reserve, in case he was needed.

Then followed a long list that brought sorrow to many a heart, of the dead and wounded soldiers and scouts.

A week after the arrival of this dispatch, a force came in sight, and it proved to be Major Denton returning with his men, for he had received a courier from Captain Forrester telling him that he had broken up the Sioux villages and forced them to still farther retreat into the mountains, so was now on his return march.

It also told of the death of the renegade queen.

Another week went by and back to Fairview came the victorious boys in blue and braves in buckskin, and as they marched into the fort Captain Roe was seen to step forward and instantly called out:

"Officers and men! three cheers and a tiger for our gallant commander, Captain Fred Forrester, of the —th Cavalry!"

The cheers were given with a will that made the windows of the houses in the fort rattle, and the tears came into Kate Kennerley's eyes as she beheld officers cheering and waving who had been Fred Forrester's bitterest foes.

But they were tears of joy, for Mrs. Denton had whispered:

"He has conquered at last, Kate, for now they are glad to do him honor."

"Yes, at last, and he deserves the victory he won over himself and his paleface foes, even more than he does for his triumph over the redskins," responded Kate.

And as she spoke Colonel Cassidy came forward with the young commander, travel-stained, his uniform in tatters, his face haggard, but with eyes bright with the thought of his triumph.

"Here is the cause of it all, Miss Kennerley—this man, nobody, for he went off and got lost and I had to look him up, and then Roe, Ames and the others made heroes of themselves in rescuing me and my men, and so it is a case of mutual aid all around, with all our thanks due to the real hero, Buffalo Bill, yes, and his braves in buckskin."

"Ever modest, Captain Forrester; but what will you say now that there are no more redskins to battle with?"

"Oh, the lion is only sleeping, Mrs. Denton, and will be wakened full soon, I fear, for Indians are not readily put down."

"But Cody has a plan on hand to take a run into the mines, and I shall ask leave and accompany him, I think."

Kate Kennerley sighed, for why was it that he seemed ever so anxious to be away from the fort, to avoid her, and yet she felt that he was by no means indifferent to her.

With this remark, and a promise to dine with the colonel that evening, Fred Forrester went to his quarters and in utter fatigue threw himself upon his bed.

For a long while he lay there, and yet he did not sleep.

A number came and saw him thus and crept away, fearful of disturbing him.

At last he arose and paced the floor, his face stern, his eyes flashing.

"I have lived down these slurs, cruel accusations upon me, I have made men feel that I was not to be crushed, and have brought those who wronged me bitterly to my feet, as it were, for many are willing to play the sycophant now, when my star is in the ascendant.

"A short while since, an outcast officer, all hated me, yet none snubbed me; oh, no, I did not suffer them to do that.

"The clouds lifted, and now my traducers would be my friends."

Two days after, Buffalo Bill, whose arm had healed, rode out of Fort Fairview and his companion was Fred Forrester.

Their destination was Gold Pocket City.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FICKLE FORTUNE.

During her short stay in Gold Pocket City, Bowie-Knife Bessie had managed to win so many games that she was laying up a snug little fortune for herself.

The miners seemed to be willing to lose a few dollars just to play with her, and now and then one would go in with the firm intention to break her bank.

Landlord Bony had tried that several times, and each time with a result that lessened the amount of his cash in hand.

After her meeting with Devil Dick, the woman seemed to be fairly subdued for a night or two; but then her flow of spirits came back to her, and she was the same beautiful, fascinating creature as ever.

There was not a miner in Gold Pocket who had not tried his luck against the lady sport, with the result against him.

So matters went on, until one night Jersey informed the lady sport that two strangers had arrived at the Roost.

"Who are they?" she asked.

"One is a daisy-looking fellow, who signed his name, as Roy Rockland, and the other is a Chinee bigger than any miner in the Pocket.

"The gent signs after his name: 'A Sport'; so isn't that funny, Miss Bessie? for you are a lady sport."

Bowie-knife Bessie did not seem to see the fun in it that Jersey did, but she said she would soon be in her place at Poker Hall, and she supposed she would see the "sport" there.

Rockland, who had done some scouting work for Buffalo Bill, had given it up after his ride to the fort, and had gone to Pocket City on a pleasure trip, with his Chinese companion.

An hour after she entered her "den," and there, not far from her, was seated a man of striking appearance, who, Jersey whispered, was Roy Rockland.

He was dressed in a well-fitting suit of corduroy, the pants stuck in handsome topboots, and wore a white silk shirt with a black scarf under the broad collar.

His face was an attractive one, and he looked like a man to do and dare anything.

His Chinese servant was seated near him, idly gazing about him as though he held no interest in anything.

The two seemed, however, to interest the miners, and many remarks were made regarding them, some loud enough to be overheard.

The "sport" was seated at the table with Landlord Boniface, who was playing cards with his guest, and losing, too, for the stranger held the best hands at every game.

"Ah, Mr. Rockland, there is our queen of fortune now, and if you can beat the lady sport, then you are indeed a champion card player.

"Let me introduce you," and Boniface Bill led the stranger up to Bowie-knife Bessie's table when their game was finished.

The Chinee followed his master closely, and Boniface Bill said:

"Miss Bessie, let me present to you a stranger in Gold Pocket, Mr. Rockland, who is a sport and would like to play a game or two with you."

"Certainly, and I am happy to meet Mr. Rockland," and Bowie-Knife Bessie was so gracious she held out her hand to the stranger.

He threw himself gracefully into a chair, with some casual remark about his happiness in meeting the lady sport, when a miner stepped forward and asked gruffly:

"Is that thar your Chinee nigger, Pard Dandy?"

"That is my Chinee friend, Sir Bluster," was the cold reply.

"Waal, Chinese, niggers and Injuns hain't allowed in perlite society in Gold Pocket, nohow."

"If you do not like the society of my friend, get out."

"Git out?"

"That is what I advised, and if you are wise, you'll take good advice."

"You git yerself!" and a revolver was leveled at Roy Rockland, but ere a word could be said the bully found the weapon wrenched from his grasp and he went flying heels over head over the crowd, by an exhibition of strength that was remarkable.

"Pitch him out of the door, Chinee," said Rockland, coolly resuming his seat, and the order was obeyed to the letter, for the Chinee raised the limp form and fired it out of the door.

"He got allee wantee," said Chinee with a grin as he resumed his seat, while Roy Rockland arose and, facing the crowd, asked:

"Are there others here who object to the presence of my Chinee companion?"

"If so, let us settle the matter at once, for I am anxious to enjoy a game of cards."

A silence followed, and Boniface Bill said:

"This is my ranch, Mr. Rockland, and when I raise no objection I dare any one else to.

"That brute got just what he deserved; but let me congratulate you upon your marvelous strength."

This settled it, and the stranger resumed his seat and began to play with the lady sport.

"I hear that you have had phenomenal luck?" he said, with a smile.

"I have, sir."

"I shall break it."

She started, but said:

"You are over-confident."

"No, I know when I am in luck, and this is my lucky day, so if you do not wish to lose heavily make small bets."

"I am not to be bluffed, sir," was the haughty reply.

"Far be it from me to offer to do so."

"I merely advise you, as I advised that bully a while since."

"I, too, decline to accept advice, so name your sum."

"I leave it to you."

"Then we will play for a thousand."

"Rather high, but let it go," and there was a silence between them, the lady sport, in spite of her smile, showing that she did not like the man, in fact seemed to dread him.

Roy Rockland played with apparent recklessness; but he won the game, yes, and the next, and the next, until the lady sport had lost ten thousand dollars, and with a smile that was positively wicked, arose from her table and said:

"Another time, Mr. Rockland, we will try our luck one against the other."

"I am always at your service," was the polite response, and the sport was turning away when the miners, who had been worked into a rage at his success against the lady sport, crowded about him, one remarking:

"No, yer don't go, pard, for yer is a sharp, and every dollar o' that money yer gives back ter Bowie Bessie!"

"Hold! Back, all of you, for this man is no card sharp, for I vouch for him!"

The words rang out through Poker Hall, and the speaker suddenly confronted the angry crowd, while in chorus they uttered his name:

"Buffalo Bill!"

A startled cry broke from the woman's lips at the utterance of the name, and with a bound she passed through the window and disappeared.

"Do you hear, I vouch for this gentleman, pards!"

"Is it enough?"

"It are."

"All right, Bill."

"Your word goes, Bill."

"Every time."

"You bet!"

And many other like expressions showed that the famous scout was not unknown in Gold Pocket City.

"I thank you, Cody, for I was in an ugly scrape, which would have caused Chinese and myself trouble to get out of."

"When did you arrive?"

"Half an hour ago. I need aid here in some work on hand, and I came to look up Roy Rockland."

CHAPTER XIX.

ROY ROCKLAND.

"So you want me, Cody?" asked Roy Rockland, as he sat in his room with the scout, after the scene in Poker Hall.

"I only know that I met Chief Cook, of the Rocky Mountain Detectives, as I told you, and hinted to him the reason of my coming to Gold Pocket City, and he told me that you had come on here the day before, and if I needed aid to call on you, for you had authority to act."

"Let me explain, then, for I owe it to you now to do so."

"I told you when we met on the plains——"

"When you saved our lives, you mean."

"Let that pass, pray, and listen to me."

"I told you and Captain Forrester that I was a gambler, and so I am."

"I took to gambling naturally, and was phenomenally lucky."

"I invested my winnings in a mine, and was robbed of it, driven from it, and nearly killed."

"I swore revenge, and took the best means to get it, and those who wronged me are now either dead or in prison."

"This tracking of those men down gave me a liking for secret service work, and I joined Cook and became valuable to him."

"To capture the gold grabbers I became one of their band, and one by one gave them up to justice. When I was doing scouting for you I was still on secret service work."

"I at the same time was on the track of a youth who had been stolen from his parents, who were vastly rich, and never returned to them in spite of rewards offered."

"I also had orders to look after a woman who was a murderess, and her photograph was sent to me."

"A short while ago I met two men whom I believed to have once belonged to the band of gold grabbers; so I

proposed to them to hold up a coach on the Overland and they agreed.

"I knew that by a certain coach a man would be a passenger who was a defaulter for a large sum, and I wished to capture him.

"I halted the coach, and a woman frustrated my plan, which was to capture the defaulter and then run him in with my two worthies, who had proven themselves the road thieves I believed them.

"This woman got the drop on me, made me a prisoner, and Rainbow Rob shot one of my men and drove over the other two.

"Fortunately I was not bound, so made my escape and returned to my camp, where I had left my Chinnee servant, while the coach went on with the defaulter and my man Carlos, badly hurt.

"Upon my way to the camp I crossed the trail at a point I had halted the coach, and there found a leather wallet.

"It was the one belonging to the defaulter, and had the stolen thousands in it in large bills.

"He lost it, was penniless, so went to work in the mines, and my man Carlos was hanged by the miners as soon as he had recovered from his injuries.

"But the woman's face haunted me, and I went to the Overland and wrote East for full particulars and another photograph, and also expressed the wallet to the bank, stating I would catch my man also, for there is a reward of ten thousand dollars offered for him.

"After leaving Fort Fairview I started here, but went up to see Chief Cook, so only arrived to-day; but I come fully prepared for emergencies.

"To-night I played with the lady sport, and she is my game.

"She was a Miss Ruby Roberts, married Fred Forrester when a cadet at West Point, poisoned his uncle to get his money, then intending to get rid of him and marry an old lover of her childhood.

"His uncle, angry at his secret marriage, made a will,

cutting him off; but when dying, it seems, made a last will, intrusting it to a bosom friend, who, with the witness to it, met with a railroad accident and it was lost.

"So they said nothing about the late will, and the property was to go to charity if not claimed by a long, unheard-of brother after a certain number of years.

"That time is up within ten days, and if not claimed Captain Forrester gets his inheritance, for the last will was found and proven genuine."

"I am glad of this," said Buffalo Bill.

"So am I, for the noble fellow deserves it.

"But to this wife.

"She is a murderess, and more, I have all the proofs, and she is as wicked as sin herself.

"Now, Cody, you know who I am and let me say that I am here to arrest the defaulter, and the Lady Sport, while, in a boy here they call Jersey, I have found the young fellow stolen some years ago when but ten years of age."

"I congratulate you indeed, and let me tell you that in a cabin on the mountains, Captain Forrester is waiting my coming here to see if the lady sport is really his wife, as I took an idea that she was.

"If so, he knows that she returned West for mischief, and means to bring charges against her as a murderess."

"I can save him that unpleasant duty at least.

"But I am glad to know he is near, and delighted to find you here.

"Now go with me while I rope in my game, beginning first with Jersey, the boy, then the defaulter, and last, but not least, the lady sport.

"You will help me?"

"Gladly," and the two men left the room together.

An hour after six persons rode out of Gold Pocke City.

They were a Chinnee and a man in irons—the defaulter, Roy Rockland and the lady sport, the latter with her hands bound securely.

Then came Buffalo Bill in the lead, with the boy Jersey riding by his side.

They were on their way up to a cabin on the mountain where Buffalo Bill had left Captain Fred Forrester.

CHAPTER XX.

UNLOOKED-FOR RETRIBUTION.

Upon a point, or lofty spur, of a mountain, overhanging a valley through which dashed a swiftly-flowing river, stood a humble cabin which had long been without an occupant.

Its builder and owner had been murdered there, and so the miners called it the haunted cabin.

Here it was that Buffalo Bill, to whom the spot was known, had taken Fred Forrester to stay, while he went alone to Gold Pocket, several miles away.

With a fire on the hearth, and his blankets, the young officer made himself quite comfortable, for he was amply supplied with edibles.

But he could not sleep, and springing to his feet, began to pace the floor.

He did not see the face of a man peering in upon him, nor did he know that he had been tracked for days.

The fire burned brightly and revealed the officer's face distinctly, and then the man lowered a revolver and said hoarsely:

"Great God! what would I have done?"

After a moment he knocked at the door.

Fred Forrester threw it open, but beheld not the scout, but a most remarkable-looking personage there.

"Are you Lieutenant Forrester?"

"I am."

"Did you ever see me before?"

"Well, yes, I think I have."

"Yes, I am not one to easily forget; but where did we meet?"

"Some men had you, accusing you of murder, and were about to hang you as I came along, if you are that man."

"I am, and you made them surrender me to you, and saved my life."

"Yes, though I half believed you guilty; but they had no right to hang you on suspicion."

"I am the man, and I have never forgotten you."

"I did not even know your name; but I remembered your face and form, for neither is easily forgotten."

"Well, sir, I have knocked about, and been knocked about, until men call me Devil Dick, though I guess I deserve the name."

"Once I was known by the name of Oscar Ralston, and I loved a pretty girl away back in New York State."

"I went wrong and came West, and I met her some weeks ago, and she told me how her life had been ruined, and by you."

"Great God! By me! Man, you lie!"

"I do not; but now I see you, and know what you did for me, I believe that she does."

"She told me she would marry me if you were out of the way, and I vowed to kill you and make her a widow."

"I went to Fort Fairview and found you had come here, so tracked you, and to-night saw you come to this cabin with Buffalo Bill."

"When he left I determined to kill you, and when I saw you I recognized the man who had rescued me from death."

"Now, Captain Forrester, upon your honor as an officer and a man, tell me all about Ruby Roberts and yourself."

"Gladly will I tell you the whole truth; and more, I will say that I came to Gold Pocket to see if the woman calling herself the lady sport is my wife, for my wife she is."

Then he told the whole story of the woman's sins to gain gold, her perfidy, and the strange eventful life she had led.

"Captain Forrester, I loved that woman with all my soul."

"She is as vile as I am, and now I hate her, for I believe every word you have uttered—Ha!"

And the man sprang behind the door as Buffalo Bill and those with him entered.

"Ah! this is your work, Fred Forrester," hissed the woman, as her eyes fell upon him.

"Yes, Ruby, you must no longer be allowed to kill, curse and wither all you come in contact with.

"You have brought yourself to a fearful fate," was the low, but stern utterance of the officer.

"Ruby, you lied to me, and as life no longer holds a charm for me, you go with me to death!"

The deep-toned voice startled all, and before a hand could be raised Devil Dick sprang toward the woman, grasped her in his arms, and, with a bound, had cleared the cliff a few feet from the cabin door.

A wild shriek rung out from the woman's lips, a burst of mocking laughter from the man's, and they went down, down three hundred feet, and plunged into the foaming torrent, which swept them away beyond the power of man to find.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCLUSION.

Back to his parents went Jersey, the kid, to find a loving welcome, and to become a gentleman in the end, worthy his name and riches, while, so in love had he become with the army, that he got a cadetship at West Point and is now an honored officer commanding an outpost upon the frontier, about which he seems to have a vast deal of information.

Tenderfoot Tom kept his pledge to Buffalo Bill, so that the scout kept the secret faithfully of how he had once gone wrong.

Poor, brave Texas Jack lies buried up at Leadville,

where he died some years ago, but his memory is still green in the hearts of his comrades.

Roy Rockland continued in his border detective work, with Chinese as an ally, and won fame and fortune, and to this day he and Buffalo Bill are "pards unto death."

As for our army friends, Colonel Cassidy was retired with a brigadier-general's rank, and Major Denton, after being promoted to a colonelcy, resigned and settled down in an elegant home on the Hudson, where his wife is known as the most charming of hostesses.

And Fred Forrester, the one time outcast officer?

After the fearful death of his wife, so beautiful yet so wicked, he obtained a leave of several months and went East, where he came in possession of the fortune left by his uncle.

Then he returned to Fort Fairview, sought Kate Kennerley and told her the whole strange, sad story of his life, and that his lips were no longer sealed, and begged her to become his bride.

He was her beau ideal among men, the only one she had ever loved, and with a heart full of joy she consented, and they were married at Fort Fairview, Major Denton giving the bride away.

At the request of his lovely wife, Fred Forrester gave up the army and is now an honored citizen of the metropolis, where few of their friends suspect the romance that their two lives have known.

THE END.

Next week's issue (No. 79) will contain "Buffalo Bill's Decoy Boys; or, The Death Robbers of the Big Horn." The scout's work at Fort Fairview was over when he had defeated the redskins under the renegade queen, but there were new and even more exciting adventures awaiting him in a new country.

Look out for the story next week. It's a corker.

CURIOUS DREAMS



Hustle along, boys.

We are rapidly nearing the turning point into the last lap of this contest. On page 31 you'll find full particulars about it.

A Wild Chase.

One lonely night, about the first of January, 1900, as I was lying in my bed, I heard a cry and went to the window and looked out, and to my surprise I saw a lady with a black veil over her face. She was carrying some kind of a big bundle, and she seemed to be somewhat frightened. I went downstairs and followed her. We had not gone very far when I heard a splashing sound in the water, and I hurried there as soon as possible, and to my surprise she had thrown the bundle in the water. I made no hesitation, but dashed into the water to secure the bundle, to see what was in it, and when I opened it I found that it was a baby, and when I looked for the woman she was nowhere to be found. I found one of her tracks in the snow and followed them.

The baby was dead, however, and I laid it down under a tree and started on after the footprints. I followed them for about an hour, when I came to a station, and, as it happened, there was a train just pulling out from the depot. I made all haste I could and followed the train on a run. It had not got under headway, and I reached and got hold of the rear cars. I held fast and it dragged me for about a hundred feet, when I managed to get on. I went into the car and to my surprise found that it was a baggage car.

The baggage-master covered me immediately with his pistol and ordered me to hold up my hands. I obeyed and then he inquired my business there. I soon explained and he let me off, saying that if the woman came around that way he would hold her till I came. I went on through the cars looking for her. I inquired of a man in the foremost car and he said that there was a lady of her appearance just went out on the platform next to the engine. I immediately went there and she was not there. I feared that she had jumped off. She seemed to be aware that I was in pursuit of her, and I was crawling on the rear of the tender, and, as I happened to look up, to my

surprise I saw her on top of the car. She was lying down looking straight at me. Just as I saw her she drew a pistol and fired it at me. I saw what she was doing, and dropping down I just escaped the bullet. The fireman came rushing out of the cab and grabbed me. He wanted to know what all the noise was about, and when I explained to him and showed her to him he said that it was not much wonder that I was making a noise, and she started to run across to the other end of the car. I jumped upon the car and followed her. She turned and was going to shoot again, and I tried to knock up her hand and lost my balance. I fell from the car and, in falling, I awoke and found that it was only a dream.

A Strange Dream.

(By Earl R. Foley, Ill.)

We had been playing Indian at school on Wednesday, September 24, 1902, and had large toy pistols for revolvers. There were fourteen Indians and five scouts, four friends and myself.

We played all day, and that night when I went home I was tired and went to bed soon.

I fell asleep soon and commenced dreaming. I dreamed that we were in a large, thick forest, fighting Indians. There were five white men and we fought them till our ammunition ran out, and then we clubbed our way through with the butts of our pistols.

Three were killed, and my friend and I were captured. The Indians were going to burn us at the stake, and while they were eating we loosened the thongs that bound our wrists and made our escape.

But we were discovered before we were out of sight. Then the Indians pursued us about three miles through thick forests, but we could not outwit them, and finally we came to a large cliff. Then we did not know what to do, as there was no escape, for the Indians were closing

in on us. We knew the horrible death we would meet if captured, so we decided to jump. We waited till the Indians were nearly up to us, then gave a leap. The Indians gave cries of surprise when we leaped.

This is all I can remember of my dream, for I was awakened by falling out of bed.

I sat upon the floor gripping the handles of my two pistols, and trembling with fear. It was about seven o'clock in the morning, and the sun's rays were streaming through my window.

I have not played Indian with boys since, for I do not want to have another dream like this one.

Looking for Gold.

(By Geo. Guider, Ia.)

I always had an idea in my head that some day I would go hunting for gold, and it worked upon my mind so much that lately I dreamed about it. The other night I had a curious dream. I thought I was gold hunting in the West, and after leaving a little town of which I do not now recall the name, I started through a big woods close by the town.

I was riding a good horse, and had plenty of provisions in my knapsack, and was well armed.

I rode on until evening, only to eat a little at noon.

I stopped about seven o'clock in the evening to camp over night. I found a nice opening in the woods, with plenty of grass and a spring nearby. I started to build a fire, and being attracted by a noise, looked around just in time to see an antelope dart away.

I leveled my rifle and fired, bringing him down, just as he was going in the thick woods. Taking a few slices off him for supper, I salted the rest and put it in my knapsack for further use. After I had eaten supper I staked my horse and then turned in for the night, sleeping soundly until morning, when I was awakened suddenly by a noise that sounded like thunder.

Jumping up I looked all around me, but could see nothing but my horse, who also seemed scared. My first thought was that a storm was approaching, but the sky was clear and showed no sign of a storm.

I tried to dispose of it from my mind while I watered my horse and cooked breakfast, but I could not. I found myself constantly trying to solve the problem—what a sudden shot like that meant out in the wilderness.

After breakfast I packed the things together and, getting on my horse I made up my mind I would discover what it all meant. Following the sound as close as I could for about ten miles I came upon a cabin. Getting off my horse I tied him to a tree, and looking at my revolvers I approached the cabin.

I knocked several times, but no answer came; then I tried the door, but found it locked. Taking an ax that lay nearby I smashed the door down and entered. The first thing that met my gaze was a big picture of my mother, hung upon the wall. Filled with curiosity to know how my mother's picture got out in that country I began a search of the cabin, finding several bags of gold. Seeing a piece of paper upon a table I picked it up and read it. That explained it all. I was in my own brother's shanty. He had left home ten years ago to go gold hunting, and we had never heard from him since.

Going outside to investigate I found my brother, and also discovered the cause of the noise I heard. There lay my brother near my feet, with his head crushed in. He had been blasting out rock, trying to find some more gold, but had met his death.

Going back to the shanty, which was now mine, I prepared for the night, which was not far off. Waking up in the morning I made up my mind to return home and report the news of my poor brother, and as I had found what I was looking for there was no need of staying any longer. So getting on my horse I took what gold I could and started for the village, camping in the same place over night where I had camped before. I reached the village just in time to catch the train for home, and after selling my horse that served me so well I returned home in safety. This ends my story.

A Terrible Night.

(By G. M. Flint, New Mexico.)

Here is a dream I had just three nights ago. It was terrible. I hope I will never have it again.

After putting out my light I fell asleep, and suddenly I seemed to be awake.

The moon was shining brightly and before me was a vast expanse of sand.

I had my brother with me—he has only one leg. Behind us came about four or five howling savages—coming, it seemed to me, at twice the speed that my brother and I were going.

At every step our feet would sink up to the knees in sand. Slowly but surely they drew nearer. My poor brother fell behind; having only one leg, he could not go as fast as I could.

I could not bear to leave him, so I had to slow up. Nearer and nearer they came. It was a dreadful feeling not to have the strength to go faster, and to have my brother calling pitifully for me not to leave him.

Nearer, yet nearer they crept. Slower went my brother, his pale face staring in front of him.

Already the Indians were within a few yards of him. I wanted to shout, but could not utter a sound.

Slowly they gained. I started to go ahead. What was my horror on turning around to see that my brother had stopped short and fallen on his knees with his crutch beside him and his hands extended imploringly to me.

My heart was ready to burst; his pale face was showing out vividly in the moonlight; his eyes sought me, but could not see where I was, although I was only a few feet away. I started to go back to him when suddenly the Indians, whom I had not noticed, being intent on watching my brother, gave a sudden leap and in a moment I lost sight of him.

With a cry and a start I awoke. The moon was shining brightly through the window directly on my face, and the perspiration was running down my body in drops. I sat up in bed afraid to move or lie down again and go to sleep. It lacked about two hours of morning, and so I sat there shivering until dawn broke. I never want to dream another dream like that again. I got up and went into my brother's room, but he was still sleeping.

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Think of the fun you can have this winter with one of those cameras. You can take and develop photographs of all your friends. Full directions go with each camera. Think how useful and handy a first-rate hunting knife or ax will be when you go hunting or trapping in the woods this winter.

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HERE IS A LIST OF THE PRIZES:

The three boys who send in the three most interesting accounts will each receive an **Eastman Pocket Kodak**, with complete outfit. The camera takes picture 1½x2 inches; uses film, and has capacity for twelve pictures without reloading; weight six ounces. This wonderful little camera takes pictures equal to the most expensive. It makes negatives of such sharpness and definition that beautiful enlargements of any size can be made from them. Has perfect Achromatic Lens of fixed focus, Rotary Shutter, with sets of three stops, square View Finder, and covered with fine Seal Grain Leather. Takes snap shots or time exposures. Easily carried in pocket or on bicycle. Complete with roll of film for twelve exposures and Leather Carrying Case, with room for three extra film cartridges.

The five boys who send in the five next best accounts will each receive a **Safety Hunting Ax**. Dimensions over all 11x4 inches; weight 18 ounces. The blade is made of solid tool steel, finely tempered and highly polished. The handle is made of mild steel, nickel plated on copper, with handle plates of engraved hard rubber. The guard is of sheet steel, hinged on a spring in such a manner that either open or closed it is firmly held in position. The construction is unique

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